CHAPTER V

SOCIAL EMANCIPATION

The Malankara Catholic Mission during the course of its ecclesiastical services, devoted, much of its time for the Social Emancipation of the people. As said earlier, the society in Kanyakumari District was graded into upper caste and lower caste. The people, being orthodox and conservative, strictly followed the ancestral norms, taboos and religion. Any devotion from the established system was viewed seriously with suspicion and punishment. Moreover, caste system divided the Hindu society into number of groups\(^1\). The prevalence of untouchability, unseeability and unapproachability, completely upset the depressed communities. In the social ladder, the Brahmins stood high and enjoyed all privileges as religious head and royal advisors. The Nayars, formed, the privileged class next to Brahmins. The privileged position of the caste Hindus enabled them not only to assert their influence but to acquire landed properties and high positions in Government Service. For, instance in South Travancore the Nayars replaced the Maravars in the Military Service and gained control over the revenue system and some of them were employed as accountants and clerks in the state\(^2\). The various taboos enforced on the depressed communities namely the Ezhava, Nadars or Mukkuvas, Pulayas and Parayars completely prohibited their

---


progress. In consequence the low caste people were subjected to various hardships and social disabilities such as the denial of rights to walk on the public roads, to enter in to the temples, to draw water from the well, to wear upper garments, chappals, to use umbrellas and excluded from all important social functions and jobs. In such a situation, the Christian missionaries especially Malankara Catholic Mission actively involved in eradicating such evil practices that deep rooted in the society.

When Malankara Catholic Mission set its foot at Marthandam, they saw the deplorable condition that prevailed among the depressed communities without proper food, dress and shelter. Most of them were landless and were completely under the mercy of the high caste Nayars who possessed all the landed properties and high positions in Government Services. Poverty on the one side followed by contagious diseases on the other side, the people were in an abnormal condition. While the priest and nuns visited the homes irrespective of caste, religion and creed they saw the starving people affected by some diseases living in an untidy condition, giving a pale look. Therefore, early steps were undertaken to uplift them from this situation. On such visit, they consoled the suffering people and preached the Gospel. Moreover, the ignorant people believed in ghost, devils and evil spirits. Therefore, sisters of the daughters of Mary convent were deputed to teach and train the innocent poverty stricken women of the remote areas, who hesitated to meet the

---

nuns initially. Thus, when they engaged in religious propaganda, untouchability and other social evils began to fade away. In the name of the mission, people of different caste mingled together in religious observances which helped greatly to forget caste distinction. They stood for unity, preserve social harmony and maintain co-operation among people of various segments.

After attaining this social justice, they concentrated on another social welfare scheme intended to promote the culture of the adherents. In those days, the followers of Malankara Catholic Mission were mostly from Nadar Community. Most of the children of this community were untidy. They seldom take bath and wandered from one place to another without proper dress. The nuns during their visit saw the poor children without washing their hands after eating fish and tapioca which was their staple food.

The nuns provided them food and clothing and advised their parents to keep their children tidy. This motivated the parents to bath their children daily. It removed the foul fish smell that comes from the hands and body of the children. This enabled them to protect their health too. Besides this, arrangements were made to give education to such children.

**Home for the Homeless**

Another notable social service of the Malankara Syrian Catholic Mission is towards providing housing facility to the poor

---

homeless people. To attain this objective, in each area were selected for allotment. The Mission authorities purchased minimum land, constructed a small house and gifted to them freely. In the Vimalapuram Church Area, one poor family from Tirunelveli was given a piece of land at Kattachivilai where in a small house was built for their settlements. Similarly poor people who live in Government (porampokku) land were also selected and provided with 3 to 5 cents of land for the purpose of building a house. For instance during 2005-2006 the MIDS have supported 25 families to construct the own houses and they shifted to new houses. To accomplish this, MIDS provided them with loan and subsidy to complete the construction work. In some of the houses sanitary toilets were also provided with such a facility enabled the rural poor people to lead a hygienic and healthy life.

St. Antony’s Home

As a part of social emancipation the Malankara Catholic Mission founded St. Antony Home at Kuzhithurai in 2004. With a view to help the physically handicapped, mentally disabled children, socially deprived children, orphans, semi orphans and children who are differently abled, this home was started. Such disabled were admitted and gave proper training. It also helps such children to realize their potential ability and provide them opportunities to fulfill their ambition. Brought under Marthandam Diocese, the St. Antonys home provided free

---

7 Personal Interview with T. Gnanaprakasam, Church Worker, Aged 60, residing at Nattalam, dated 07.01.2012.
8 Maria Arputham, V., op.cit., pp.84-85.
uniform, dress, books and food, also gave special exercise to improve their physical disability; imparted better education, provided talents imparted physical exercise; extended financial support to the students; arranged picnic to update their knowledge and provided sympathetical attitude to develop their personality and character on the basis of love and affection\textsuperscript{10}. In order to rehabilitate the physically handicapped young ladies, the Bethany rehabilitation center was opened at Kumarapuram on 1, June 1988. It provided training in type writing, sewing, embroidery, candle making, beekeeping and poultry forming and similar other works\textsuperscript{11}.

**Orphanage**

Mar Ivanios the Bishop of Trivandrum strongly felt the establishment of orphanages. He stated that he was ready to hand over large estate but not orphanages. From this it is evident that much importance was given not only to maintain the orphanages but to its protection too\textsuperscript{12}. Therefore the missionaries decided to establish orphanages which became another notable service. It is a residential institution for the care of children whose parents are dead or left. During the inception and spread of this mission, the priest of the church and nuns of the monasteries who visited various families at different places came to know the condition of the orphans suffering in the streets. Therefore the missionaries felt the need for establishment of orphanages. In the Bethany Ashram an

\textsuperscript{10} Personal Interview with Fr. Booney Alex, Director St. Antony’s Home, Aged 31, residing at Vencode, dated 03.02.2012.


orphanage was started while Mar Ivanious was at Sherampur. To establish the orphanage, the required money was collected by means of donation. In the Bethany Ashram orphans and destitute who have no parents and relatives without shelter were admitted in the orphanage. Therefore irrespective of caste or religion, one by one orphan from different places were admitted. In course of time a separate orphanage was formed.

Mukkadal Santhi Ashram undertook to rehabilitate the people who addicted to bad habits such as drinking and other social evils. Counselling was given to such people and many of them were provided treatment. Private agencies came forward to give free food to the aged people residing in the Ashram. Moreover, in the Mukkadal Santhi Ashram, facilities were provided to the individuals or groups to perform meditation. The Christ Saniyasa Santhi Ashram at Boothapandi runs a home for the aged destitute men and day care center to look after the elderly people.

The Shalom Home established at Kirathoor was an orphanage inaugurated by Bishop Yoohanon Mar Chrysostom admitted, destitute and incurable sick people who were left out by the doctors and provided with necessary help and treatment. The contact telephone number was also widely published in their magazine. Besides this, the sisters were actively engaged

---

13 Durbello Christus, Kunratathu Vilakku, (Tamil), Kottayam, 2008, p.149.
14 Ibid., pp.149-151.
themselves in looking after the orphans. For this purpose two orphanages were established at Marthandam and Chellankonam. They accommodated hundred women and 60 families respectively. These orphanages provided job oriented education to earn money to meet their daily expenses.

**Home for the aged**

Similarly, in many of the economically poor families, aged parents were considered as a burden. Proper care was not given to them. Realizing this, an asylum for the aged was established at Pilankalai in 1975. Named as St. Joseph Asylum, it received state aid in 1982. With the help of the Central Government a building namely “Helpage India” was constructed\(^{20}\). It accommodated 45 permanent inmates and 23 non permanent members. They were provided with food, shelter and clothing. Subsequently, another home for the aged namely St. Joseph’s Home for Aged was opened at Mathar. Sisters are deputed to look after the aged. They obtained medical assistance from the mini health centres.

**Women’s Welfare Scheme**

The attainment of Women’s progress is one of the primary objectives of the Malankara Syrian Catholic Mission. Realizing the ignorance and poverty of the people, much attention was paid for their betterment. As such, in the beginning itself measures were adopted for their cultural transformation. The nuns during their visit to the homes of the people, understood,

---

the sufferings of the poor poverty stricken people. Most of them engaged in manual labour to earn their daily bread from the dawn to dusk. Usually they wore tormented dress, ate mal nutritious food and look untidy. Therefore the Christian Missionaries attempted to uplift the condition of women. They were given moral instruction to keep their homes tidy and their physique healthy. Moreover, employment avenues were provided to them besides education. Most of these women are greatly neglected, isolated and ignorant of their own potentialities. If this ignorance isolation capacitated with knowledge and with proper skills, they can contribute much to their self reliance\textsuperscript{21}. Since women in our society are very much exploited and dominated by men in many cases, the importance of women and the income they bring are unrecognized. Therefore to develop self confidence among the women of the low income group, the Malankara Mission made them to involve themselves in all financial matters. This in turn enhanced their self esteem and confidence\textsuperscript{22}. To empower rural women, proper training and guidance was given to them to develop their leadership activities and qualities\textsuperscript{23}.

Towards women’s emancipation, the organizing self help groups, made attempts to emancipate women from the jaws of dowry system. Economically poor women were provided with financial assistance to meet their marriage expenses. Some of the church authorities gave financial assistance. For instance Mar Ephraem marriage fund was created to help the women.

\textsuperscript{21} MIDSAR, 1998-1999, p.3.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 2005, p.6.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 2005-2006, pp.5-6.
Accordingly an amount of 5 lakhs has been deposited as fixed deposit. The interest accrued from the deposit was given as marriage assistance. Every year four candidates24 were given Rs.10000 each on 8th April during the memorial service of the Bishop25.

Similarly sick people were kindly treated. On 19 August 2007, an aged poor man of Mecode parish was given Rs.250 to meet his medical expenses26. The priest and the sisters of the respective parishes with their church members visited the houses when ever they come to know demise of the people of the locality. On hearing the news of the demise they went to the house and consoled them by singing Christian Songs and performing prayers. So also another notable service was giving obituary columns in their publications giving the details of the achievements of their leaders and prominent persons27. Demise of Bishops, priest and other eminent persons, are also informed through the magazines and bulletins28.

Apart from this, the action council of Malankara Catholic Mission made a plea to the central government to give reservation to the Nadar Malankara Catholics which is given to other Nadar Community in appointments and admission for education29. They also protested on hearing the social evils and immoral behaviour. The Malankara Syrian Catholic Missionaries

24 They are Catherin Sabhila, (Christu Rajapuram), M. Helan of (Nathurkonam Parish), S. Jini (Urambhu), G. Bindhu (Kirathoor Parish), Marthandam Diocesan Bulletin, Vol.IV, No.4, April 2007, p.16.
28 Ibid., pp.34-35.
29 Ibid., Vol.35, No.1, Marthandam, June 2001, p.10
protested against the rape of nuns in Madhiyapradesh and organized protest march procession to Collectorate, Nagercoil and observed one day fasting\(^{30}\). Thus they stood for social justice.

Another notable service was the rehabilitation measure adopted towards victims and addicts of alcohol and other intoxicating drugs. Through health camp, they advocated the bad effective of narcotic drugs and intoxicating liquors and counseled them to adopt, Drug deaddiction. By this process they helped many people realize their responsibility and became true citizen, forgetting their bad habits. The missionaries stood for equality and social justice. As such, they were for giving equal rights to women too. With this aim in mind, some of its members attended a conference from 13 to 20 February, 2008 held at Delhi on empowerment of women. In this conference all the participants decided to abolish all discrimination against women, in the socio cultural and politico economic life. They condemned dowry, atrocities on women, rape, and discrimination in employment\(^{31}\) and other social, economic and political arena. Moreover, to help the working women, especially the mothers, child care centers were opened at Thadikaramkonam, Attoor, Soosaipuram, Ambilikonam and Anakarai. Moreover, marriage preparatory classes were conducted for the welfare of men and women.


Children’s Welfare

The Children’s Welfare is one of their main concerns. Therefore childrens sponsorship programme was started in 2002. The MIDS approached different agencies and individuals to get sponsorship support. The Malankara Syrian Catholic Missionaries actively involved in safeguarding life and welfare of children, because childrens are considered as the most valuable resources of a community. But, they are not getting enough care to develop their inherent talents. It is noticed that many children are suffering a lot due to neglect, poverty, exploitation and drudgery. If a community fails to protect the survival and development of children, the community fails to protect the survival and development of children the community itself perish. Many factors like illiteracy, poverty, failure of crops, absence of earning sources and back of life support system are some of the reasons attributed for the employment of the children for earning wages in the brick kilns, and cashew nut factories. Therefore, to avoid the child labour, this mission initiated children’s sponsorship programme. As a result, students from socio economically backward sections of the society sponsorship amount were given to them to continue their education. It reduced the burden of the poor parents to meet the educational expenses of their children. Moreover special coaching programmes are also arranged on Sundays to the sponsored children to improve their skill and capacities.

---

In 2005, some sixty children were selected under children sponsorship and assistance was given to meet their educational expenses. Besides giving specialized training, guided study tours are organized for them to expand their knowledge and outlook\textsuperscript{34}. Special coaching classes are contacted, guided tuition programmes are arranged and scholarship assistance was provided for them. Special coaching programmes and evening tuition programmes are organized to the students of Palluzkuzhi, Manchathoppu and Ezhusattupattu besides distributing uniforms, and study materials to the needy children in the tuition centers\textsuperscript{35}.

Resource crunch of the rural families resulted in the drop out of children from the school studies. They seek employment in the cashew factories and brick yards. Realizing the imminent danger to uphold the rights of the rural poor children and to create a healthy environment for their growth, the MIDS selected 159 bright children and provided them financial assistance to continue their school education and develop their personality. Moreover, the MIDS celebrated children’s day, arranged evening tuition to educationally backward villages namely Manchathoppu and Ezhusattupattu, organized a one day carrier guidance programme for the benefit of the children. In 2007-2008 some 202 children’s were provided support with interest free loan scholarships either to join or continue job oriented courses\textsuperscript{36}.

\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Ibid.}, 2004-2005, p.10.
\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Ibid.}, 2006-2007, p.6.
\textsuperscript{36} MIDSAR, 2007-2008, pp.5-6.
MIDS and Social Services

Marthandam Integrated Development Society shortly known as MIDS is a social organization of the Malankara Catholic Diocese of Marthandam. Formed in 1997, to co-ordinate developmental activities, it was registered as a Trust on 9th July 1997 under the provisions of Indian Trust Act with the Register No.415/97. The vision of the society is based on love, which means equity and justice. It has wider mission of empowerment of marginalized section which means people below poverty line, widows, abandoned women and children, physically handicapped and those people who are not in the main stream of the society. With these missions in mind, the MIDS cherished to the development of marginalized and weaker sections with in the stipulated period of 20 years. Therefore, the MIDS concentrated for their empowerment, participation, capacity building and enabling. According to this programme, empowerment is widely refers to empower the powerless, self responsibility, self the management to facilitate the poor to access to resource and institution. Participation refers to the participation of the people, project planning implementation, monitoring and evaluation and participation of the people in the developmental activities of MIDS. Similarly capacity building is prompted for enhancing the capabilities of marginalized sections in leadership, communication, discussion making problem solving, accounting self management and skill upgradation. So also enabling meant for prepare the target group to make best use of the available resources both material and human. Facilitate the target group

---

to take maximum advantages of the different development programmes offered by Government and other agencies\textsuperscript{39}. In order to carry out its programmes in actual day today life, the MIDS has adopted various schemes and formed different organizations such as Niraivazhu Sangam and Self Help Groups. Usually they prepare the schemes and budget provisions for 5 year period\textsuperscript{40}.

Self Help Groups is an organization effectively functioning under MIDS. It worked hard for the overall development of the economically weaker section. Before 2004, 343 Self Help Groups were organized which comprised of 599 male members and 6009 female members. Its branches were established in different parts of Kanyakumari District. These Self Help Groups looked after their target area. They discharged different function such as providing houses to the poor homeless, undertake renovation and repair work, engaged in skill development training, motivate rainwater harvesting, inculcate, income generation programme, look after save a family plan and provide loan for technical education and looked after the construction of toilet\textsuperscript{41}.

**Community Organization Programmes**

Community Organization Programme is formed to create people’s welfare groups (\textit{Nala Aikyams}). It motivated them to take up Community Organization Programmes for their development. With this aim, the MIDS formed 350 \textit{Nala Aikyam} in its jurisdiction\textsuperscript{42}. With the object of preserving unity, fourteen

\textsuperscript{40} MDB, Vol.I, No.4, April 2008, p.15.
\textsuperscript{42} MIDSAR, 1997, 98, p.1.
animation programmes and seminars were arranged for Aiykyam representatives and seven hundred animators. These seminars were conducted for the purpose of acquainting the participants about a need approach and strategies of organizing the people. Resource persons who associated with peoples movements were invited to animate the sessions which enabled them to get better understanding about various day to day developments. The animators who posses leadership qualities are responsible for the formation as well as functioning of the Aikyams. In order to equip skill to the animators, training was also given to them on topics like what is development, communication skills, and leadership.

**Niraivazhvu Sangam**

One among the agencies of MIDS is Niraivazhvu Sangam which is created for the promotion of Self Help Group. It’s objectives are to ensure peoples participation in their development; to promote integrated sustainable human development through community participation; to create fundamental respect for the social and spiritual dignity of all human beings; to make credit available to the rural poor for larger economic activities; to provide alternative source of income for rural families; to make credit available to set up micro-enterprises; to form SHGS (Aikyams) in to effective sangam and enhance their capacities for addressing social issues\(^{43}\).

Five Aikyam’s were grouped together and formed a Niraivazhvu Sangam, which is the apex body. This sangam is

formed to promote saving habit among the villagers. As a result, the sangam members are motivated to save money and the amount so mobilized are given out to other needy members for interest, records reveals the functioning of seventy sangams in their target area.

The credit union programme motivated the villagers to save a small amount to meet their future unforeseen expenses like medical bill, death and marriage. Usually the credit union meets in a common place where the villager’s come together and discusses their problems. The credit union offered loans to its members at a cheaper rate. This plan saved the members from jaws of money lenders. In 1999, there were 507, Self Help Groups in its operational area with a total of 9633 members. The members are regularly save a fixed amount in their group and using some amount to support its group members to meet their sporadic. The total savings of Self Help Groups is more than 5 crores. Besides crores is revolved among the group as MIDS and 1.3 crores as bank loan.

The credit is given to the poor for consumption and production purposes. During 1998-1999 the credit unions extended different types of loan to its members. It helped many families to come up in life by taking income generation programmes. However, during 1999-2000 Niraivazhvu Sangam took concrete steps to make all the Aikyam’s into Self Help Groups. This measure is appreciated and recognized by the

---

44 MIDS, Vision, Mission, Goal and Objective of the Society, p.2.
Government and other financial institutions. Moreover, the MIDS visited all the Aikyam’s and explained the advantages of forming Self Help Groups. The methodology and working of Self Help Groups were also explained to them.

To encourage the Self Help Groups, meeting was convened by inviting the leaders of Self Help Groups of the three mandalams namely Kaliyakkavilai, Marthandam and Nagercoil. The meeting was held at Mantharamputhur and Kaluvanthittai. In the meeting its leader’s submitted the account concerning income and expenditure followed by discussion. Besides, they discussed the monthly report and deliberated the future plan\textsuperscript{47}. Accordingly, the members of the Self Help Groups met twice in a month to save their money and discussed common problems. By 31 March, 2000 more Self Help Groups have opened accounts in the banks and such members got enough opportunity to obtain loan from the Self Help Groups\textsuperscript{48}. During the year 2000-2001 the Self Help Groups made rapid progress. So both the Government and other developmental agencies recognized the Self Help Groups. Moreover, they began to utilize the available resources for the betterment of the community. In order to form new Self Help Groups, the members of MIDS visited new villagers and formed 98 new Self Help Groups\textsuperscript{49} making the total to 176 Self Help Groups. Regular Training Programmes at regional and cluster level were organized to enhance the capacities of Self Help Groups. For example the leaders and members of Self Help Groups were given two day training. It was conducted at

\textsuperscript{47} MDB, Vol.I, No.4, August 2004, p.15.
\textsuperscript{48} MIDSAR, 1999-2000, p.6.
\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Ibid.}, 2000-2001, p.3.
Marthandam, Kuzhithurai, Vimalapuram, Mathar and Mathoorkonam. On such meeting, they discussed the progress of their own achievements and future plan\textsuperscript{50}. On such occasions the methodology of the working of Self Help Groups and other issues were discussed in detail. Moreover, the organizer periodically visited the groups and sat with them for group meetings. In addition, meetings of the leaders were held at the cluster level every month. Besides for the effective monitoring and functioning of Self Help Groups the existing MIDS regions are divided into 10 clusters and the clusters are formed by clubbing of number of near by villagers. An organizer who is in charge of the cluster acts as its head that has to motivate the group members. As a result of this decentralization, freedom was given to each region to plan projects and programmes best suited for the area. Meetings of the Self Help Groups leaders were held once in the three months at regional level.

The Self Help Group members are not taking up various income generation programmes by using the micro-credit assistance from MIDS and other financial institutions. From their records it is understood that 14 members of the Self Help Groups were given Rs.2,80,000 to invest in Self Employment Programme such as goat rearing and other business establishments\textsuperscript{51}. This year fifteen Self Help Groups were able to receive matching grant assistance from DRDA. NABARD supported three training programmes organized for the Self Help Group leaders. In course of time Self Help Groups become very active in most of the target areas who actively engaged in

improving the living condition of its members. The members of Self Help Groups were directed to become policy holders of any one of the schemes of life insurance corporation\textsuperscript{52}. Through various animation and awareness programmes, the leaders of Self Help Groups were able to give the message that the real and lasting development should come from one self and what the agencies can do is to facilitate the process of their development.

During 2001-2002 many new Self Help Groups were ushered in and organized training programmes for its new members. Moreover, the entire MIDS operational area is divided into 10 clusters, Kaliyakkavilai region has got four clusters, Marthandam and Nagercoil cluster has got three each. Once in every month cluster level meetings were organized. As a result Self Help Groups became very effective in the respective areas. With a view to improve their present living condition, through various activities twenty like minded people formed Self Help Groups. Its members participated in the developmental process, took initiatives and made effort to control over resources and benefits. Thus, Self Help Groups served as best tool to attain Self reliance and Self sustaining development of the poor\textsuperscript{53}. In course of time, the Self Help Groups attempted to build appropriate, community based institutions\textsuperscript{54}. Subsequently the Self Help Groups emerged as micro development units and initiated programmes to create awareness about the importance of preserving natural resources for a better tomorrow\textsuperscript{55}. To attain leadership qualities and to increase their capabilities to lead the

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 2002-2003, p.2.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 2004-2005, p.5.
society towards betterments, proper training was given to them\textsuperscript{56}. At this state of growth, the Self Help Groups are becoming Catholics of development of rural villager’s. Need based trainings and animations are given to the groups to provide them proper guidance in managing their funds and resources. As such, it became an effective instrument for the alleviation of poverty\textsuperscript{57} that took deep route in our society. It helped the rural women to take up responsibility that took deep route in our society. It helped the rural women to take up responsibility which could be evident in the last panchayat election in which 42 women Self Help Groups members contested of whom eleven members won in the election. Regional level meeting of the Self Help Groups leaders are organized in the month of June 2007 and, need based training are organized for its leaders and members. But at the same time, some inherent weakness which curtailed the individual initiative and transparency has crept in which weekend the activities in the Self Help Groups. Therefore to wipe out this weakness, Self Help Groups adopted in effective system to ensure individual involvement and transparency of fund management. The records reveal the fact that MIDS has 512 Self Help Groups with a membership of 470 men and 8834 women totaling 9304\textsuperscript{58}. By 2009-2010 the Self Help Groups focused for capital development, social development, gender development, decision making\textsuperscript{59} and Self managed community services such as

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{56} MDB, Vol.IV, No.9, September, 2007, p.10.  \\
\textsuperscript{57} MIDSAR, 2006-2007, p.6.  \\
\textsuperscript{58} MIDSAR, 2008-2009, pp.3-4.  \\
\textsuperscript{59} Human Development refers to access to education, Primary Health Care and other essential services. Social Development Means increasing the opportunity of the poor to participated.
\end{flushleft}
increasing community based groups in microfinance, health and natural resource management gender and development involve improving the status of women through health and welfare programmes and promoting their participation in the development of the society. Social protection addresses the vulnerabilities and risks of age, illness, disability, natural disasters, economic crises and civil conflict.

**Tsunami : Rehabilitation Programme**

Another notable social service rented of the Malankara Syrian Catholic Mission is the whole hearted support extended to the Tsunami affected people in Kanyakumari District. The Tsunami of 26 December 2004\(^{61}\) led to severe loss of property and human life. Moreover the horrors of Tsunami bewildered the people and the sense of fear is still with them.

Tsunami is a Japanese word which is translated into English as “harbour waves”. But in the fast it is known as “tidal waves”. But the scientist called it as “seismic sea waves”. Thus Tsunami is a “wave train”, (Chain of waves) generated by an impulsive disturbance that vertically displaces the water column. Occurrences like earthquakes, land slides, volcanic eruptions, explosions and the impact of cosmic bodies cause Tsunami. On seeing the destructive impact of the Tsunami, various religious and secular organizations came forward and swung into action to speed up the rescue and rehabilitation activities of the affected people. They helped rush the bodies to the mass burial

---

\(^{60}\) MIDSAR, 2009-2010, p.5.  
\(^{61}\) *The Hindu*, 27\(^{th}\) December 2004, p.3.
ground\textsuperscript{62}. The divesting impact of Tsunami struck coastal region of Kanyakumari District.

The MIDS initiated various programmes for the development of the Tsunami affected families in 5 villagers in Kanyakumari area. Self Help Groups were formed for the coastal women and encouraged them to take up savings and credit activities. So also micro enterprise training was given to selected women who longed to take up alternative income generation activities. This measure reduced their dependence on sea and sea products. Moreover, loans were provided to such women at nominal rate of interest; further measures were undertaken to help the school going children with the uniforms and other study materials. Besides, evening tuition programme were arranged under the guidance of trained teachers\textsuperscript{63}. Thus life is limping back to normally in Tsunami affected villages thanks to the timely help of MIDS. To save the people from the jaws of Tsunami the MIDS initiated two types of programme, one for the betterment of the children and the other for the socio economic development of the women folk.

For the benefit of the children, evening tuition programme for the school going children was organized at Kovalam, Siluvai Nagar, Puthugramam, Vavathurai and Kanyakumari. School uniforms and study materials were distributed to poor and needy children. Summer time skills training programmes were organized for the high school students. It facilitated them to seek for job oriented courses. As a result of the support given to the

\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Indian Express}, 29\textsuperscript{th} December, 2004, pp.1-2.

\textsuperscript{63} MIDSAR, 2005-2006, pp.8-9.
income generation activities the affected women of these villages were able to start petty shops, cloth business, rice selling, mobile fancy store, sea shell handicrafts and tailoring\textsuperscript{64}.

The MIDS continued Tsunami rehabilitation work in the subsequent period too. Under their guidance various families were able to settle down in 38 Tsunami affected villages. Thirty Eight effective Self Help Groups were formed in the Tsunami affected areas and were provided with training for sustainability through micro enterprise development to women, evening tuition for school going children, supply of uniform, study materials, scholarship, which resulted in an attitudinal change towards the part of development\textsuperscript{65}.

During 2008-2009 the MIDS successes in forming 74 new Self Help Groups in the Tsunami affected villages with the support of “Caritas France” community development project. It was implemented in 12 villages. With its assistance, besides giving legal awareness training, skills training in tailoring and embroidery, sea shell handicrafts and bamboo mat bag making were started. Apart from these, evening tuition programme were organized in four villagers namely, Kundal, Ezhusattupattu, Kottaram and Manchathoppu to guide the school going children in their studies. In addition, computer training was provided to the children of Kanyakumari and near by areas installing five computers, two printers and a scanner with internet connect facility\textsuperscript{66}. For the rehabilitation of the Tsunami affected people 34 villages of Kanyakumari District, the health for one million

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 2006-2007, pp.9-10.
organizations undertook to supply of food materials to all the people, besides supplying dress materials to 451 families benefiting 1510 members. In addition, cooking vessels were supplied the 18 families by which 108 people were benefited. Moreover from 27-29 January 2005, the employees of health for one million organizations were given training to the villagers of Babuthurai, Puthukiram and Siluvai Nagar and consoled the affected people. Incourse of time, the health for one million organizations undertook to rehabilitate the Tsunami affected people who engaged in the preparation of like workers of Maramadi, Kottipadu, Chimankalani, Asath Nager. Inaddition, various articles were supplied to the fishermen traders Ambalakadi, Kaluvanthitai, Alloor, Vathiyar Vilai, Kottaram, Semparuthivilai, Valukanparai, Erazhakuzham, Mulagumoodu. The health for one million organization helped 65 poor families lime workers of South Thamaraikuzham and supplied with Lime Shell and Charool needed for Lime preparation.

The Malankara Catholic Missionaries not only helped the Tsunami affected fishermen of the seashore and fishing traders settle in the land area but extended their support to the coir industries which was established near the seashore. The coir industries were divested by the tidal waves of tsunami. Therefore the raw materials were totally destroyed and the pits were completely filled with sand. Consequently, a number of coir industries were submerged which led to stoppage of production and employment. Realizing the gravity of situation, the Malankara Catholic Missionaries with the help of one million

---

organization and MassDaser International Organization of Germany helped the affected people to revive their industries\textsuperscript{69}. Moreover 72 families of Pannaiyur near Rajakkamangalam who were engaged in coir making were supplied with required raw materials\textsuperscript{70}.

During the Tsunami, nearly 176 families of Kovalam near Kanyakumari lost their homes and other valuables. Therefore the Mary Makkal Kaniyar Sabai offered shelter to 2500 peoples of Kovalam to settle in the Stella Marrish Social Service Center, Kanyakumari. Moreover, they were given food and medicine. In addition they were provided with rice, egg, other food items and clothes through HOM\textsuperscript{71}. The UNICEF (United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund) came forward to create health awareness and the need for providing first aid to the affected people. Further, it supplied food, and medicine to the needy people\textsuperscript{72}. Nearly 4000 people below one year old were given baby food. Sick and aged people, pregnant women, milk feeding mothers were given milk, egg and multi vitamin tablets\textsuperscript{73}.

Thus, one could see the multifarious social services of the Malankara Syrian Catholic Mission from a visit to different parts of Kanyakumari District and from their records. Many of the depressed communities attained status in the society thanks to their dedicated services.

\textsuperscript{73} \textit{Ibid.}, p.18.