

**MINUTES**  
**JESCOM SOUTH ASIAN ASSISTANCY MEET 2006**  
**BAGA, GOA, 20- 22 OCTOBER 2006**

**Present:**

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|-----|--------------------|----|--|
| 1.  | S Paul Raj         | -- | JESCOM Coordinator, Kohima Region          |
| 2.  | Benitto            | -- | Goa Province (Representative)              |
| 3.  | Donald D Silva     | -- | for JESCOM Coordinator, Jamshepur Province |
| 4.  | K L George         | -- | JESCOM Coordinator, Darjeeling Province    |
| 5.  | George Sebastian   | -- | JESCOM Coordinator, Kerala Province        |
| 6.  | K.M Mathew         | -- | JESCOM Coordinator, Gujarat Province       |
| 7.  | Anil Chakranarayan | -- | JESCOM Coordinator, Pune Province          |
| 8.  | Xavier Joe Freddie | -- | JESCOM Coordinator, Madurai Province       |
| 9.  | Mr.Robert Cruz     | -- | JESCOM Coordinator, Sri Lanka Province     |
| 10. | Glenn Menezes      | -- | JESCOM Coordinator, Delhi Region           |
| 11. | P.J. Joseph        | -- | JESCOM Secretary, South Asian Assistency   |

**Excused:**

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|----|--------------|----|---|
| 1. | Myron Perira | -- | JESCOM Coordinator, Bombay Province (Report sent) |
| 2. | Richard Rego | -- | JESCOM Coordinator, Karnataka Province            |

**Absent:**

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|----|------------------|----|--|
| 1. | Abraham Ignatius | -- | JESCOM Coordinator, Patna Province (No news)     |
| 2. | D. Ravi Sekhar   | -- | JESCOM Coordinator, Andhra Province              |
| 3. | NN               | -- | No coordinator for Nepal Region, not represented |
| 4. | Pradeep Shail    | -- | JESCOM Coordinator, Hazaribag Province           |
| 5. | Alexander Ekka   | -- | JESCOM Coordinator, Madhya Pradesh Province      |
| 6. | Lalit John Tigga | -- | JESCOM Coordinator, Ranchi Province              |
| 7. | Gucci Saco       | -- | JESCOM Coordinator, Dumka-Raiganj Province       |
| 8. | Julian S Das     | -- | JESCOM Coordinator, Calcutta Province            |

- 1 The meeting began at 10. 00 a. m. with a prayer by Mr.Robert Cruz
- 2 JESCOM Secretary welcomed the coordinators for the meeting. The participants also gave self-introductions to facilitate group building. The Secretary also shared with the assembly the excuses offered by some coordinators and the absence of any news from some others, in spite of sending e-mails and snail mails. He also shared in brief the present media situation in India. He also introduced to the group about the concept and practice of the Community Radio.
- 3 The Secretary then gave an update on activities the secretariat done in the year. They included attending 1) The JCSA Secretaries meet held at Lonavla, Pune, March 11-12, 2006, 2) Visit of common houses – Satya Nilayam and Vidya Jyoti and seven provinces 3) He will also be attending the Jesuit Pastors' meet in Bangalore, October 26 -29, 2006 and 4) A National consultation on communication – communication as mission - at Ishavani Kendra, Pune, December 12-16, 2006

4 The participants then finalised the timetable and the previously circulated agenda. The group decided to start the entire session with each one sharing about the media work and activities that are carried on in each Province/region during the year.

- (i) **Kohima Region: (Paul Raj)** – after giving a brief geographical and ecclesiastical history of the Region, he said the Jesuits focused on the Adivasis. The Jesuits do the following activities: Evangelisation which is the primary work, 2. Touring the Villages and 3. Starting schools. Jesuits do take up developmental works too. Since it is a nascent region the Region has not gone into the Communication ministry. However, for better evangelisation they do some communication work such as: Writing, learning the language, producing songs in their language and producing primers etc. However, communication is not a ministry by itself. Some of the individual Jesuits are doing communication work and this ministry is not yet centralized.
- (ii) **Goa Province: (Fr. Benitto)** - Goa had a communication Centre but slowly it got withered away. But the present Provincial is very much interested in this ministry. Hence he is encouraging the younger members. Especially he had sent two scholastics for study in this line. The scholastics themselves recently brought out 3 CDs. Though there is no Communication Commission in the Province as yet, small works are being carried out. One priest prepared for this ministry was taken away for the Juniorate. The province has some video documentaries done, helped the Americanm Jesuit Crew to produce the video documentary. Some work in the Konkani Kendra. One video produced by a Scholastic is being used extensively for Vocation Promotion purposes. There is a great hope for the future since all the scholastics are computer literates.
- (iii) **Jamshedpur Province: (Fr. Donald)** Communication work in the Province was started by Fr. Hess about 30 years back. Individually he has worked a lot collected good number of equipments etc. but it got closed down, even though there was no lack of money. Then Fr. Mike took up the work assisted by a lay person. There came up a documentation centre. However, there was no vision, objectives and coordination for this ministry in the province. Three persons were trained for this ministry, but all of them got frustrated. It is high time that a communication centre should be started as it is easy to coordinate because the coordinator himself is a consulter and that the Provincial is very supportive of this ministry.
- (iv) **Darjeeling Province: (Fr. George)** – The Province has done nothing collectively in the field of communication. However, individually some work is being carried out like: Translation of the Bible into Nepali language, Thesaurus in Nepali, Compilation of Proverbs in Nepali etc. There are a few individual Jesuits regularly write and publish and one write big plays. Besides these, there are two young priests who are qualified in Dance and Hindustani Music. One is also proficient in Musicals and producing skits. In the college, there is a Mass Communication Department. Besides, the English Department of the college has produced two CDs: One on Population and another on the Campus.  
There is a lot of scope for this ministry. There are many a Home-Recording-Studios in Darjeeling. There is a possibility of net-working in the Province. What the Province need at the moment is that it should start training the students in Public Speaking. The Province should tie-up with the Communication Department of the College.
- (v) **Sri Lanka Province: (Robert Cruz)** - Mr. Robert explained the prevailing context of Sri Lanka. On the one side there is war and on the other the effect of globalization. There is

also anti-Christian, anti-Western, anti-conversion and anti- NGO feeling. Yet we want to get into Radio. Even though it is very difficult to educate or to make the youth media literate, we should go towards the children in schools at the early stage. We should also train teachers in Media. He also proposed to have the Communication Course in Scholasticate and a guided training in Communication from the Juniorate level.

- (vi) **Kerala Province: (Fr. George Sebastian)** - "Thanmaya" communication centre is mainly busy with writing and publishing. After George has taken up as the Director about 25 books have been published, 120,000 copies of a magazine is published every month and about 15 picture Stories that has gone to 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> edition. The centre conducts Media Education, Collect and distribute Media materials, maintain a Film and book library. About 350 programmes were conducted this year among which 250 were outreach programmes. It has also produced 20 programmes in CDs on Spirituality and Value Education. It was pointed out that at the Province level there is no person available for this ministry and there is no expressed commitment to this ministry and so the future of this ministry is not certain.
- (vii) **Gujarat Province: (Fr.Mathew)** - Communication Ministry of Gujarat consists of the following centres – Gurjarvani, Anand Press, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, Catholic Information Service Society, and RISTA (Communication in Pastoral Field). Gurjarvani has produced audio and video cassettes and conducted training programmes with the themes: women Empowerment, Christian Liturgy, Tribal Identity, Developmental issues, etc. The self-supporting GSP is engaged in publications, organise exhibitions of religious books; Anand Press, besides publications, conducts courses on DTP and give apprenticeship; CISS runs bible correspondence course and short-term Course on Journalism. RISTA conducts journalism workshops for school children; Katha, a local art form, is well used by a Jesuit for spiritual and social mobilisation. He gives about 200 Kathas a year with the help of his team of students.
- (viii) **Pune Province: (Fr. Anil)** - Divya vani is the media cum pastoral centre. The centre organises programs for students, and runs a 110-year old Marathi Monthly – Niropya - which focuses on catechetical, social and family themes. It also conducts music & Leadership Training. It has published two books: i) Historical survey of this magazine, ii) Good Poems over 100 years. There are a few more individual Jesuits doing their own media work.
- (ix) **Calcutta Province: (P.J. Joseph)** – EMMRC, Chitrabani and the Communication Department of SXC are the three major centres which are involved in media production and training. EMMRC now prepares multi-media packages in academic and non academic subjects for the students throughout the country. Its programmes are telecast both in English and Bengali. Chitrabani's initiatives, besides its regular training, research and production, include launching of 3<sup>rd</sup> Kolkata Film Festival, production of 3 Holy week audio albums. The centre also helped to produce several audio album and dub 4 feature films. The Communication Dept of SXC has three courses which are in good demand. The province has three persons specifically being trained for media work – viz, music, dance and popular culture. There is not much coordination among the centres as they all have different orientation and activities. For the first time the Commissions in the Province is given proper voice and necessary funding. The commission plans to bring out a vision statement for communication soon to guide the course of this ministry.

(x) **Madurai Province: (Fr. Freddie)** - Under JESCOM-Madurai come three units: 1.Culture & Communication, 2.MOSAIC, 3.Vaigarai Publishing House. C & C Revived Tamil & English Journals viz. "Silambam" and "Madia Jpournal" and media Education in and around Chennai and other non-Jesuit schools and colleges. It is being prepared for Media Documentation Centre of the Province. This year is the Silver Jubilee year of C & C. A civic celebration is being prepared on 16<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2006. MOSAIC (Media Oriented Service for Action and Integrated Conscientization) produced a 15 minutes video Documentary for NCDHR – "Dalits – On the Wings of Liberation". It was instrumental in mobilizing the 800 Traditional Drum Beaters in the district of Villupuram and organizing them as a Trade Union. This work is being carried on in other districts of Tamilnadu. – Aiming at Guinness – collecting around 30,000 percussionists in one place (Chennai). VAIGARAI consists of two units: 1. Non-Profit-making section, 2.Profit making/ tax paying unit. First Unit publishes books for Vaigarai Book Club, Value Education for Std.1 – 12 (Tamil & English), Human Rights Education, Training Programmes for Teachers of Value education and Human Rights Education.Second Unit: has a book store – sells not only our books but also from other publishers. Last year alone from Jan.- Dec. it had a revenue of Rs.35,16,213.00. Its uniqueness - Publishing quality books and selling at a cheap price. Individual Jesuits involved in Media Apostolate include - Fr.Joe Antony: Editor of "New Leader" (Completed 15 years as Editor), edits JIVAN. Fr.Chelladurai, the Principal of the Govt. Music College. His Summer School of Carnatic Music is 33 years old.

(xi) **Delhi Province: (Fr.Glenn)** – The Province has a few members involved in communication, mostly in schools. Several videos with social themes have been made for use in schools. This has proved to be low cost and highly effective. However, an organised approach in the communication ministry is yet to be made.

5 On 21<sup>st</sup> October 2006, after morning sessions, we left for Bom Jesu at 1.30 p.m and celebrated Holy Eucharist at 3.00 pm, at the Sepulchre of St.Francis Xavier. We also visited the Jesuit community at Bom Jesu.

6 On the last day i.e. 22<sup>nd</sup> Oct. 2006, an input session was conducted to the whole group by Fr.George Sebastian on "Mass-mediated Culture and Values". He stressed the role of Media as: Mediation, Intervention, Cultural analysis, study and analysis of the meaning of media, study of values and ideologies and finally the study of grammar, structure, syntax of film/media.

7 Fr. PJ read out the minutes of last year and then each province/region shared how they celebrated the Jubilee. They included Solemn Mass, Video shows, calendars, flex, book marks, play, exhibitions, competitions, multimedia presentations, posters, books, seminars, civic and religious functions.

8 Members discussed on the need for a full time coordinator for Communication ministry at the assistancy level. Even though it may be difficult to find such a person, this effort must go on showing our commitment to the ministry. It may be a possibility to find even a lay person for the post.

### ***Suggestions and action plans***

9 The group pointed out that a few issues emerged from the sharing should be paid attention to. (1) Media Education in various stages of formation of ours. (2) While the education ministry in the Provinces is well established this ministry is not so. The Provinces should

create a structure to fulfill this lacuna. As JESCOM coordinators how do we go from individual to collective venture. Can this be net-worked with schools?

- 10 **Media Education in various stages of formation:** Long time back, there existed some training to our scholastics. Documents were prepared. Let us search for these documents and get them circulated among ourselves first. We are really concerned about it. There is a ten days or one week course in Juniorate. But afterwards neither in philosophate nor in theologate this course is taught. Though in Theologate, a course on “Theology of Communication” is offered, it is not up to the mark. It was pointed out that the dynamics of the course should be given to the staff in order to have some follow up and that we must identify people and ask them to teach.
- 11 **Resurrecting the old syllabus:** It was suggested to resurrect the old modules, update them and then give the scholastics training. Accordingly a core-group was formed to study the matter and present the modules according to various stages of formation like Juniorate, Philosophate and Theologate. The group members were: **Frs. George Sebastian** (Convenor), **Glen Menezes**, **Freddie** and **Mr. Robert Cruz**. They were given the task of finishing the work by the end of December 2006.
- 12 **Awareness Programmes:** It was also suggested that we, as coordinators must clarify what is JESCOM, Conduct reflection sessions, gather a few members and start giving awareness to broaden the understanding of communication. We must facilitate the provinces to reflect on the Media Reality today.
- 13 **South Asian Conference on Communication:** For the next year it was proposed to conduct the South Asian Conference of JESCOM along with laity – about 100 persons in total. The topics could be our formation, how to respond to the present scenario? Initially it will be only for Jesuits and then Laity could be invited. But the target group should be the “youth”. The question about the number of days, the resource persons, finance, etc. could be discussed through Email. It was decided that Chennai could be the Venue for the next meeting. **Fr. Freddie** will be the convener, **Fr. George Sebastian** and **Mr. Robert Cruz** will form the core group for this purpose.
- 14 **Next meeting:** It was proposed to have the next meet sometime on the second week of November 2007 in Chennai.
- 15 JESCOM Secretary, Fr. PJ thanked each and every one. And the meeting came to an end at 4.00 pm.

P.J. Joseph SJ  
Secretary  
JESCOM South Asia

PS: JESCOM Secretary would like to thank Fr. Freddie for recording the minutes during the meeting.