

**ST. JOSEPH'S LEPROSY PATIENTS' SOCIETY**

**KALASAPAKKAM – 606751**

**ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 2022 – 2023**

St. Josephs' Leprosy Patients Society as the name itself indicates is an organization that has been catering to the multifarious needs of persons affected by leprosy and their families. The organization was founded by Fr. Schlooz and Mr. P. John. Fr. Schlooz as a pioneer in leprosy work in South India had clear understanding about the problems and needs of leprosy affected persons and their family members. Mr. P. John as a person personally affected by the disease also had personal experience about the suffering and humiliations that leprosy affected ones had to undergo in society. In order to make people understand that leprosy is not a disease caused because of sins committed, or because of the curse of gods, or because of sexual activity, both the founders wished to make people aware that leprosy is like any other disease and it is totally curable, and that is it is not as contagious as it was made to be. The beliefs of people that were contrary to scientific truths were the factors that motivated the two founders to organize a society totally dedicated to the cause of leprosy and leprosy affected people.

Many programs, projects and activities have been undertaken over the years through the auspices of St. Joseph's Leprosy Patients Society. Some of them were for creation of awareness in the general public, some were for people with symptoms of leprosy to motivate them have early detection and prompt and continued treatment and some for rehabilitation of patients cured from leprosy. There were also programs for skill development training and educational sponsorship for children of leprosy affected persons etc. In the recent years the organization has also been extending services and help for persons suffering from general disabilities, mental retardation and cerebral palsied.

Many a number of programs have been undertaken during the years of its existence for the benefits of the affected ones and their families. They include awareness education on early detection and prompt and continued treatment, rehabilitation programs, skill development training programs, educational sponsorship programs for children of leprosy affected persons etc. In the recent years the organization has also been extending its services and help for persons suffering from general disabilities.

Following is the brief report of all the activities that were undertaken by St. Josephs' Leprosy Patients Society during 2022-2023. Before proceeding to describe the activities it would be fitting to record our sincere thanks to every individual and organization that have contributed both monetarily and / or otherwise in making things possible for St. Josephs' Leprosy Patients Society to meet the demands of the situation.

### **Activities carried out by St. Joseph's Leprosy Patients Society during the current year**

Some of the on-going programs of the society are as follows. All efforts were made during the year to give proper and continued follow-up of all programs and activities. The staffs and committee members of St. Joseph's Leprosy Patients Society spared no efforts in making things possible and did their level best to reach the objectives.

- The committee members and staffs of the organization continue to participate in the health camps organized by government health department in the villages of the service area of St. Josephs' Leprosy Patients Society. Through its participation, St. Joseph's Leprosy Patients Society has given wide publicity about the conduct of the camps and mobilizing people to avail the services made available in the camps. The self-help groups of women have been giving a helping hand in the organization of these programs.
- Our staff members have been working very closely with the self-help groups in the project villages and participate in their meetings to give health education for the prevention of communicable diseases that include leprosy, Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS.
- St. Joseph's Leprosy Patients Society has the firm belief that it is only through education real changes could be effected in the lives of people and this is more so in the case of children of leprosy affected persons. Hence the organization has been doing its level best to help the children of persons both under treatment and the cured to pursue their studies without much trouble to the parents. The committee members of the organization have been bearing the cost of books, notebooks and other stationeries, dress materials etc. In addition to these the committee members have also been spending on purchase of cosmetics, casual wear, and inner wear. They also meet the pocket expenses of such children. As a non-budgeted activity, St. Joseph's Leprosy Patients Society has been paying the tuition fees for 12 selected students admitted for higher education.

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### **Food expenses**

The organization has complete realization that no one should be encouraged to lead a dependent life. But, there are some individuals who are in desperate need of help from someone or some organization. Such persons are so poor or so badly afflicted that they cannot earn a living left alone. St. Joseph's Leprosy Patients Society had identified such persons in the villages of the service area and had made provisions for meeting their basic needs. The organization has been making regular supply of rice, dhal and other essential food items to 231 persons. In addition to this it has been accommodating in its campus and meeting all the needs of 7 families in which at least one person is affected by leprosy. Under the foreign bank account 168314 rupees has been expended towards this item. A further 1274500 rupees has been expended under the local fund account.

### **Free Distribution of clothes**

St. Joseph's Leprosy Patients Society had distributed clothes to 87 males and 154 females that involved an expenditure of 138934 rupees. 310. The beneficiaries are very much thankful to St. Joseph's Leprosy Patients Society for this humanitarian help.

### **Medical treatment expenses**

It is the practice of many rural families to postpone treatment of any illnesses that occur to them, as this involves huge expenditure. In order to avail quality treatment, rural people need to travel to the nearest town or city. Women in particular postpone qualified medical help for want of money. As a result of this, many rural women are always sick and they live with the problem until it becomes serious. Under the circumstances, St. Joseph's Leprosy Patients Society during this year has provided money for the treatment of 32 persons (19 females and 13 males) and the total money involved on this count is 86321 rupees.

### **Leprosy Awareness Medical Camps**

St. Joseph's Leprosy Patients Society continues to organize awareness medical camps in the villages to make people aware of all aspects of leprosy that include causation, early symptoms, availability of modern medicines to cure the disease, wrong ideas and notions concerning leprosy, complications of the disease, what we can do to eradicate leprosy from the country etc.

During the current year, St. Joseph's Leprosy Patients Society organized leprosy awareness medical camps in 21 villages with the active participation of the leaders and members of women in self-help groups. The leaders and members of self-help groups of women mobilized young men and women to participate in rallies, public meetings, mass education programs etc that were organized as part of the awareness programs. A total of 429000 rupees had been spent in carrying out this activity.

As a follow-up of the Leprosy Awareness Medical Camps, St. Joseph's Leprosy Patients Society organized Leprosy Weekly Mobile Clinics. Totally 256006 rupees were spent on this activity.

### **Special Program Expenses**

In spite of the realization that the best help that one can provide to the needy people is to make them empowered, self-sustained, self-confident and self-fulfilled in all aspects of life, there are people that need immediate help and cannot wait for transformation through educational process. Under the circumstances, St. Joseph's Leprosy Patients Society has no other go than to extend its helping hands. During the current year St. Joseph's Leprosy Patients Society has undertaken the following charity programs as a special program. A sum of 105000 rupees was expended towards this program. This program included meeting the basic needs like free rice distribution, meeting the medical expenses, cost of clothing etc. Other expenses included the following – providing MCR footwear, supply of all essential food materials, dress materials, blankets, bed spreads, pillows, essential vessels etc.

### **Medical Camps**

Medical Camps during 2022-2023 were organized in 5 places in Arni block and 3 places in Polur block. People in the neighbourhood villages were invited to participate and receive the benefits. People from the lower economic groups were specially invited to make use of the services. Wide publicity was given to inform people about the organization of the camps. The doctors from the Primary Health Centers were kind enough to participate in the camps and did the check-up. A total of 1248 men and women were seen in the medical camps and given treatment. Most of them had only minor problems like cough, cold and fever. Persons, showing symptoms of tuberculosis were given by the doctors referred have sputum examination in a health care facility. Two cases of HIV infection were identified during the camp. They were given intensive counseling by the

doctors and were asked to receive treatment from the headquarters government hospital in Thiruvannamalai or in Vellore. Organization of this activity involved an expenditure of 268692 rupees.

### **Special School for the mentally retarded children**

The Special School for the 37 children affected by mental retardation and cerebral palsy and some disabled children continues to be organized by St. Joseph's Leprosy Patients Society. 4 qualified Special Teachers have been providing the services to the 37 children. The program is receiving help from the government.

### **Vazhi Kattum Thittam**

"Vazhi Kattum Thittam" (its English equivalent is "a program that shows the way" has been organized on a continuous basis. This program includes activities that enable the differently abled to access facilities and schemes provided by the government; regular home visits of all families in their respective villages.

### **Conclusion**

St. Joseph's Leprosy Patients Society realizes that what we have done looks very small. Of course in terms of the number of activities what has been done is only small. But, St. Joseph's Leprosy Patients Society is always worried about the quality of whatever we do. What we have done is to the satisfaction of our conscience and to the satisfaction of the people. St. Joseph's Leprosy Patients Society takes this opportunity to thank all those who had extended monetary help to St. Joseph's Leprosy Patients Society to implement the above-mentioned programs and activities and these include international as well as contributors at the local level. At this juncture St. Joseph's Leprosy Patients Society places on record its sincere and heartfelt thanks to the staffs of the organization for doing their level best in implementing all the above-mentioned programs. It is also the duty of St. Joseph's Leprosy Patients Society to place on record its thanks to all the formal and informal leaders, leaders and members of self-help groups of women, teachers and children in the area schools and youth groups in the villages for extending cooperation and support to St. Joseph's Leprosy Patients Society staffs and program.