

Lutheran World Service India Trust is a Christian, ecumenical organisation promoted jointly by the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India and the National Council of Churches in India. Registered formally in 2008, the organisation began work as the India programme arm of Lutheran World Federation/ Department of World Service in 1974 offering relief services to the refugees of the 1971 Bangladesh War of Independence.

The organisation works on issues of Sustainable Livelihoods, Community Resilience, Education and Health with Gender and Peace as cross-cutting themes. Its development work is concentrated in the states of Assam, West Bengal, Odisha and Jharkhand, while it responds to disasters on a pan-India basis.

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Quarterly Newsletter

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## Editorial: International Women's Day (IWD)

**Theme for the year 2020 –  
"I am Generation Equality:  
Realizing Women's Rights"**



The International Women's Day (8 March) is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. It is a collective day of global celebration and a call for gender parity and gender justice. It has grown from strength to strength from the time it first began in the 1900s. By 2020, the world has witnessed a significant change and attitudinal shift in both women's and society's thoughts about women's equality and emancipation. Many from a younger generation may feel that 'all the battles have been won for women' while many feminists from the 1970's know only too well the longevity and ingrained complexity of patriarchy.

With more women in the boardroom, greater equality in legislative rights, and an increased critical mass of women's visibility as impressive role models in every aspect of life, one could think that women have gained true equality. The unfortunate fact is that, women are still not paid equally to that of their male counterparts, women still are not present in equal numbers in business or politics, and globally women's education, health and the violence against them is worse than that of men. However, there are great improvements made over the years and each year the world inspires women and celebrates their achievements.



### LWSIT Observed International Women's Day (IWD) in Project Units

One of the strategic priorities of the LWSIT program is 'Gender', which gives huge opportunities to address various gender issues including empowerment of women in economic, social and political spheres. In all the four core projects of LWSIT based in Odisha, West Bengal, Assam and Jharkhand, the focus has been on women empowerment, reproductive child health and education of girl children, which connects to SDG No. 3, 4 and 5, i.e., Good Health and Wellbeing, Quality Education and Gender Equality.

During the observation across the projects, LWSIT emphasized on the importance of IWD, roles of women in the family and society including decision-making capacities of women and no gender discrimination. Messages were given on zero gender-based violence at the family levels and no more sexual abuse in workplaces. Besides, focus was also given on girl child education, encouraging girls for higher studies, health care for the women and adolescent girls, gender equality in job and parity in wage payment to women, etc. Gender justice and equality remains as one of the focused areas of the LWSIT program intervention both in development as well as humanitarian response programs.





# Lutheran World Service India Trust

## OBSERVANCES AND PROGRAMS

### Observance of Republic Day

The 71<sup>st</sup> Republic Day of India was observed all over India including LWSIT operational communities and some of the project coordination offices. There were programs such as mass rallies, slogans with holding of the National flag and addressing the gatherings which were organized. While some communities organized the program independently at their own place, some others collaborated with programs organized at village schools. Local Self-Government Institutions of the area also organized programs at their Panchayat offices. While addressing the gatherings, the guest speakers focused on the importance of democracy to maintain the integrity of the country. Some burning issues related to Health, Education, Environment and Gender were highlighted by the speakers. They also emphasized that social taboos and stigmas hindered the development of the country particularly in tribal areas.



### MEETINGS, TRAININGS, WORKSHOPS & NETWORKING:

- Mr. Kishore Kumar Nag, AED, attended the **Faith Invest Impact Cooperation Workshop** in Geneva from 16<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> January 2020. During this visit, AED got an opportunity to meet with General Secretary of ACT Alliance Mr. Rudelmar Bueno de Faria and Area Secretary for Asia, LWF Bishop Philip Lok. The AED came to know during the meeting from GS, the LWSIT will continue to be part of the Humanitarian Emergency Response through ACT Alliance;



- AED attended the **ACT India Forum EPRP** training held in Delhi on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020.
- Mr. B N Biswal, Manager-Emergency and Program Development attended the **ACT India Forum Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP) training** held in Delhi from the 21<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 2020.



- **OD Workshop** organized by OD Consultant, Dr. K.V. Eswara Prasad, held at the National office in Kolkata from 28<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020, attended by AED, all the Project Coordinators and National Office Staff of LWSIT

- AED attended the **NCCI Annual General Body Meeting** held in Delhi on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2020,
- On 20<sup>th</sup> February 2020, AED attended the meeting with **MCH, NELC & Normisjon** held at **Mohulpahari**;
- AED attended a **Meeting** with Board President & OD Consultant at Bangalore on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2020
- A couple of one-day **hands-on training programs** on IRR/RCM for Project Staff & Volunteers of Balangir and Kalahandi Units were held in Kantabanji and Junagarh, and facilitated by the IRR Resource People on 10<sup>th</sup> January and 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020 respectively. The objective of the program was to enhance knowledge about RCM and an understanding on how to increase yield by applying low cost use of seeds & fertilizers as per the recommendation generation format.
- On 27<sup>th</sup> February, in a meeting held at the National Office, **Graduation Certificates were distributed** to the successful trainees who had completed the WBSCL Skill Development Training Program. The Local Ward Councillor and his colleagues, AED of LWSIT and other LWSIT staff distributed the certificates and encouraged the students to use the learning for their livelihood.
- **Liaison and linkage building held** with the West Bengal State Cooperative Banks and SHG members, wherein 21 people were finalized in the Kolkata Unit to receive the loan grant to the tune of Rs. 3,30,000/-.



## LWSIT's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The pandemic disease COVID-19 has already caused havoc damage to human lives, livelihood, economy social cohesion and threat to human existence from global to local level. India is not an exception to this pandemic and the disease has hit the country ever since Indian diaspora or its own people start arriving from abroad. The number of COVID-19 cases are increasing day by day and the death toll across the globe is also alarmingly increasing which is a matter of serious concern for everyone. In order to contain the spread of the transmission of COVID-19, most of the countries enforced lockdowns which was the need of the hour. The Government of India also enforced 21 days lockdown from 25<sup>th</sup> March – 14<sup>th</sup> April 2020 to contain the spread and transmission of the virus.



In this context, since early March 2020, LWSIT initiated some programs by organizing several awareness programs to individuals, households and community levels to protect, prevent and control of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is imperative that, through proper awareness and sensitization, the people focus on Do's and Don'ts related to Coronavirus, frequent hand-washing, personal hygiene, using of masks and maintaining social distancing, etc. the spread of the transmission of the virus can be reduced. If symptoms such as coughing, sneezing, constant fever, etc. were observed by any of the family members or in the community, it is important that, they must consult a doctor immediately, and not shy away. All the projects of LWSIT such as STEER – Mayurbhanj, Kendrapada, Bankura, Balangir and Kalahandi Units; GEP – Kolkata and Bhubaneswar Units, DSSQC – Birbhum Unit and CAP-R – Assam Unit put their best efforts to mobilize IEC materials in the form of leaf plates from Govt. Health and Family Welfare Dept. in vernacular languages and shared with communities for their understanding and practicing. People with whom LWSIT work, have appreciated this effort. Staff in the Project Units also informed the communities to follow all the Advisories and Guidelines issued by Govt. from time to time, but to refrain from trusting any rumours, and not to share any wrong information related to COVID-19. It was also informed that, electronic and print media which share good information and practices related to COVID-19, the same can be adopted to reduce the transmission of the virus from one person to another. During the initial period of lockdown, Maniktala Police Station and Local Ward Councillor of Ultadanga provided food materials to the Inmates staying at SUH. LWSIT received grant support from ELCA for responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic situation. With this grant support, food materials are being provided to the Inmates of the Shelter for Urban Homeless during the current lockdown situation, as there are 40 Women and 40 Male members who are living in this shelter. Besides, Hygiene Kit materials and Masks will be provided to the people affected by COVID-19, covering a total of 1,500 families in the cities of Kolkata, Bhubaneswar and Cuttack (500 families in each location).



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**WE ARE ON  
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## TRAVELS AND VISITORS

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- ◆ Mr. & Mrs. Anne Hodne Endal (stop over meet) on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020



- ◆ Dr. K.V. Eswara Prasad, OD Consultant visited the National Office and conducted a one day workshop on the second phase of the OD process on the 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020.
- ◆ Ms. Katherine Anne Ajer (stop over meet) on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020
- ◆ Resource Partner's Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2020 and attended by:
  - Ms. Hanna Eklund, Program Manager, Act Church of Sweden
  - Ms. Ingrid Straume, Country Coordinator, Normisjon
  - Ms. Elie Kathrine Seierstad Storesletten from Digni
  - Rev. Chandran Paul Martin, Consulting Regional Representative for South/South Asia, ELCA
  - Mr. Timothy Selvakumar Melvin, Special consultant Global Mission ELCA
  - Rev. Asir Ebenezer David, General Secretary NCCI & Acting President, LWSIT
  - Rev. Joshua Peter, Executive Secretary UELCI & Board Member, LWSIT
  - Dr. K.V. Eswara Prasad, OD Consultant for LWSIT
  - Mr. Kishore Kumar Nag, Acting Executive Director, LWSIT
- ◆ Ms. Preeti Bharti (Scientist) & Mr. Manas Ranjan Sahu (Technician) of IRRI visited the STEER Balangir and Kalahandi Units. The purpose of the visit was to monitor the IRRI/ RCM programs held in Kharif & Rabi paddy cultivation and to conduct hands-on training on IRRI/ RCM related issues.