Report of the Annual Conference and the General Body Meeting of the DBHEI, on 30th November and 1st December, 2018,

At Don Bosco School Campus, Riverbelt Colony, Dimapur, Nagaland

**Theme: Nation’s Progress in the Constitutional way**

The two days conference began with the arrival of the participants on 29th November at the venue. After supper the executive body met at 8.30pm and reviewed the programmes and arrangements. There were one or two changes on the time table circulated earlier. The members added a few more agenda points for the General Body meeting. They were: the information about the distribution of the donated books, the online update of the institutional statistics every year, and the adaption of the INM Higher Education Directory for the DBHEI institutions. The suggestions of the executive body was given to the members the next day, to take it up in the General Body Meeting.

The Inaugural session began at 9.10am with Fr Maria Charles, Vice President presiding over. The session was compeered by the students of IDA course, Dimapur. It began with a welcome dance by students. The lighting of the lamp was done by the dignitaries. The presence of the IUS General Coordinator, Rev. Fr Marcelo Farfan was indeed very encouraging. The welcome address was given by Fr Jose Kuruvachira, Provincial of Dimapur. He gave some information about the Province, then welcomed everyone to the Province and wished the meeting to be very useful to all. As a sign of welcome, a Naga Muffler was put on the dignitaries.

Fr Maria Soosai , the secretary, gave an introductory speech. Fr Marcelo spoke on the various IUS programmes at the Continental levels and of the need to work along with the IUS. Fr Maria Charles spoke on the status of Higher Education in the country and the possible collaboration the DBHEI institutions could have with the DBYA- SA. At the end of the inaugural session Fr Jose George, the Provincial delegate of the Dimapur Province proposed the vote of thanks.

After a tea break, the first session was held, in which the invited speakers Ms. G A Bidyalakshmi Devi, Asst. Prof. of DBC Maram College spoke on the theme of: The Historical steps involved in the writing of the Indian Constitution. She spoke of the various processes involved in the writing of the Constitution. After one or two clarifications, the second speaker Dr Salikyu Sangtam, Asst. Prof. of Political Psychology, St Joseph University, Dimapur, spoke on the Structure of the Indian Constitution. Fr Joy Ullattil, executive member and higher education delegate of INK Province coordinated this session.

The afternoon session began at 2.30 pm with two presentations by Fr Casimir Motcham, Rector and Delegate of the Tiruchy Province on the theme: The role of youth in Nation building. He spoke on the Youth policy of India- 2014, and it was a very resourceful paper from where the participants could take many ideas to implement. The third resource person was Mr Jojo Mathew, Chief executive- ALS- New Delhi, and he spoke on the topic: Minority rights enshrined in the Constitution. Fr Innocent Suresh, Principal of Kohima, Don Bosco College coordinated the session .

After tea, the General Body meeting began under the Chairmanship of the President Rev. Fr K M Jose, the Provincial of INM Province. Fr Joackim Lobo, of Panjim- Goa Province led us to prayer. The attendance was taken, Fr Joby Joseph, Treasurer of DBHEI and the Rector of St Antony’s College, Shillong, welcomed the members. A shawl was donned on the President. Fr Maria soosai, the Secretary read the report of the previous year and the AGB meeting. The report was passed with minimum correction.

The president Fr K M Jose, in his address spoke of the higher education sector which has become very vibrant in all our Provinces. He thanked Fr Marcelo the general coordinator and Fr Maria Charles, the DBYA- SA Secretary, for their presence and guidance at the world and regional levels. Fr Jose quoted a few statutes of the DBHEI and spoke of the Salesian Identity. He also appreciated and commented on the initiative of the INM province and its Higher Education Delegate and the Commission head, Frs Thaddeus and Maria Antonyraj, for their contribution to bring out the Directory for higher education institutions in the Province, which will be a model for all others.

If needed, the DBHEI institutions can adapt the Directory for their own use, he said. He spoke of the management principles that we all have to learn, as higher education leaders and administrators. Our presence amidst students and staff has to be very effective, so that they become part of us. Campus Ministry could be a very good opportunity for us Salesians. Catholic education should have its specificity, like the turtle, we should stick out our neck to make a progress.

Fr Marcelo, the General coordinator spoke of the Common IUS programmes, Continental programmes and the various processes involved at the IUS World level. Identity, Institutional strength, educational and cultural context and the networking should improve, he said. Formation of Directors at the Continental level is already started in the South American and the European Regions. No one model will satisfy the South Asia region, since it is varied on religion, language, and culture. I welcome your suggestions and involvement in the New Logo competition and the Training for the Directors and lay persons working with us.

After the sharing by the General Coordinator the agenda points were taken up for discussion and decision.

* Online Journals, Quality programmes and innovative ideas should be shared. Simple news, ordinary and regular events of the institution should be avoided..
* We all should work towards standardization.
* We can think of a Higher Education Desk at the SPCSA Level to lobby Central Government projects.
* Institutional level, Province Level, and the Regional Level Networking must improve and make it happen and be strengthened.
* Practical level problems of finance, student strength, advertising, retaining good staff, must be addressed by the Province or the individual institution.
* The same theme of Nation Building in the Constitutional way, can be taken up for staff- Salesians and lay- training through two programmes , one for the North and the North East at St Antony”s College, Shillong and the other in Goa, Don Bosco College, Panjim. Fahters Joby Joseph and Joackim Lobo will organize the above two programmes before the next meeting.
* By way of information… the RSS feeder has all web sites of all the Christian and Minority institutes.
* The best Practices can still be worked out by Frs. Sebastin and Innocent Suresh. Those who wish to contribute can do so, before December 2018
* Success stories of our institutes, be it school, College, Youth Centre, Oratory, Parish at the National or the Regional level can be highlighted by way of publication or through Web Blog created within the DBHEI Web site itself.
* The works of the organization must be shared by other members of the executive body also.
* NAAC Accreditation will be compulsory for all colleges by 2022… was shared by way of information.
* IUS Education Group is inviting participants and members to be part of it. Those who wish can contact Fr George Thadathil, Principal of Sonada College.
* The next DBHEI National Conference and the AGM will be held in Tiruchy Province, between 14, 15, 16 November 2019. The theme will be: Youth and Social Commitment or allied topic. It is left to the Tiruchy Province to finalize.
* The Institutes of similar nature came together to share their concern. There were two groups: The Arts and Science Colleges, The Polytechnic- Engineering and Agri Colleges.
* Lot of suggestions were shared and they decided to contact each other and build network among them. Dr Neena Panandigar, the Pricipal of Fatorda Engineering College, Goa agreed to help those who need help.
* Whattsapp. group can be created for easy sharing.
* An annual plan for the DBHEI shall be prepared along with the budget and presented to the SPCSA.

The financial report was presented and approved. The pending DBHEI subscription must be paid or it should be taken up with the respective Provincials and the Economers. The same is also applicable for IUS subscription.

Fr Wifred Fernandez, the Joint secretary proposed the vote of thanks. We ended the meeting with a Hymn to Don Bosco.

After supper the Governing Body met and shared informally about the organization of the AGM and the Conference. They decided to meet in the month of April at Yelagiri Hills for a training programme and more focused planning of the Provincial level Programmes.

Post Scriptu: It was pointed out by the executive members that the following corrections be made. That is, on the second day morning after mass, the members went to the Salesian College to pay homage to the diseased Fr P L Joseph of the Dimapur Province. There were a few presentations in the afternoon by Fr Jose Palely on the theme of: What is the sixth schedule of the Indian Constitution: its purpose and prospects as applied in Assam? Fr Maria Charles on the theme of: Nation Building with Young People and Fr Thaddeus, on the theme of: The Palmyra Evolution: Strategies for Fitness, growth and Excellence of DBHEI Institutions.

During the extension of the General Body meeting, the President left as his flight was in the afternoon, but requested the meeting to continue. The organizers of the Dimapur Conference deserve to be thanked. Let us thank Fr K O Sebastian, Principal Maram College, who acted as the local organizer. The Rector of IDA Community, Fr C T Varghese deserves to be thanked as he made sure that all logistics were available for the participants and the Dimapur Province confreres who have helped in some way also needs to be thanked. Since the Conference gathering co-in-sided with the Nagaland State Hornbill Festival, the interested participants were taken for the festival. It was a never witnessed colorful event for some!

28th January, 2019 Fr A Maria soosai, Secretary, DBHEI

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