

JUST. Fr. Arul Jaganathan CSC was appointed as the director of JUST till 2005. IHDP programmes were implemented in the Holy Cross run Parishes.

In the beginning JUST did not have any infrastructure of its own and used the present ASHA centre for all its programmes. Later it was shifted to Durjoynagar near Cathedral church, and the land belonged to the Diocese of Agartala. Then, Fr. Robert Mathias CSC as the director from 2005 extended IHDP programmes throughout the diocese. Many other projects were also introduced in JUST. In 2007 Fr. Robert wanted to buy a land for JUST office and Agro Farm and purchased a land in Damdamia area. Then in 2009 he bought the present office land. By this time, nearly 2400 SHGs were formed. SHGs later were formed into Federation. Lands for the Federations to have their office were bought in different locations. Agro Farm and the present office were maintained by Fr. Jeevan Kennady SVD as the director during the period from 2013 till 2020. We got a project Italian Bishops Conference for the animation and training of SHG federation. Then in 2020, Fr. Lathees S, took over as the director. He is the first diocesan priest to take charge as the director of JUST. Then on January 8, 2021, foundation stone was laid for the new office for JUST. And on 19th March 2022, the new office was inaugurated by Fr. Paul Moonjely, the Caritas Director and blessed by our Chairman Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro CSC. Officially, we started functioning from this office on 19th May 2022.

After the official beginning of JUST in 1997 till 2022, it had 6 directors. Fr. Roy Thalackan csc, Fr. Mathew Kunnathukat csc (for a short duration at the time of the transition of IHDP from the Holy Cross Fathers to the JUST), Fr. Arul Jaganathan csc, Fr. Robert Mathias csc, Fr. Jeevan Kennady SVD and Fr. Lathees (present director). All of them did their best in their own style. They all contributed for the growth of the JUST in infrastructure, land, finance and the concept of empowerment of the people. What we see is the proof of their hard work.

During the last 25 years, just concentrated mainly on the community development of the people in Tripura. We did program for the people of Halam, Reang, SHGs in various communities irrespective of tribe and religion, emergency relief work, health, non-formal education, and women under the guidance of different directors and our chairman Bishop Lumen Monteiro.

Grateful to you all who had been the reason for its glorious existence in the land of Tripura.



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JANA UNNAYAN SAMITI TRIPURA (JUST)



THE JOURNEY OF
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25 YEARS OF SERVICE IN THE SOCIAL FIELD IN TRIPURA



THE JOURNEY OF JUST

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JUST started its journey officially on the 28 th November 1997 by registering as a society. But it is not the beginning of the Catholic Church in the field of Social Work in Tripura.

Tracing back the history of social work by the Catholic Church among the people in Tripura, it was in 1937, Fr. Raymond Massart CSC, the first permanent resident priest who got permission to stay in Tripura from the Maharaja of Tripura, arrived at Mariamnagar. The Holy Cross missionaries got permission to enter and settle in Tripura on one condition that they should not try to convert the Tripuri community into Christianity.

In the year 1948, Fr. Leo Gomez CSC started a social service organisation called '**The Catholic Jana Sangha**' (credit cooperative society) that reclaimed many of the alienated poor tribal lands through mortgage systems. CJS was functioning from Mariamnagar. The society was further well organized by Fr. Robert Marcel CSC. Society also supported the people through promoting cooperative fishery, orchards, and improved farming systems in the tribal areas, otherwise dependent on shifting cultivation (Jhum). Unfortunately,

in spite of good and progressive works done by the Catholic Jana Sangha, the society became dysfunctional by late 1970s or early 1980s due to lack of human and financial resources.

Then in the year 1990, **Integrated Human Development Programme (IHDP)** was conceived in the hearts and minds of the Holy Cross Fathers in India. The programme was running having its office in Champaknagar Pastoral Centre having Fr. Mathew Ullatil CSC as its first director. In 1992, it was funded by MISEREOR. During this time IHDP took concrete steps by starting several grass root groups. In 1996 Fr. Arul Jaganathan CSC was appointed as its director till 1999. He concentrated on forming Self Help Groups. By the year 1999, it had 155 SHGs (90 women, 4 men and 61 mixed) from 115 villages. All these groups have undertaken several activities in the economic, social, political, cultural, health and education fields of their lives, thereby bringing about a social transformation at micro level. In 1996, the Diocese of Agartala was created bifurcating from erstwhile Silchar Diocese. Then in 1997, the **JANA UNNAYAN SAMITI TRIPURA (JUST)** was created as the social wing of the diocese of Agartala and was registered as a society. Fr. Roy Thalackan CSC became it's founding director. The programmes were implemented from centre of the Association for Social and Human Advancement (ASHA). Though the IHDP was started by the Holy Cross Fathers, yet was implemented together with the Diocese of Agartala. In April 2000, a contract was signed between the Fathers of the Holy Cross, North East and the Diocese of Agartala. Accordingly, the JUST and ASHA became separate social service societies; JUST for the Diocese of Agartala and ASHA for the Fathers of Holy Cross North East. The IHDP programme was handed over to

