

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The history of Bethany Congregation and its activities is a saga of a group of dedicated Bethany Sisters who have been properly trained and trimmed for a selfless service. It was a small lamp lit by Msgr. Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas the founder of Bethany Congregation, at a time when there was much darkness everywhere. Actually it was a period of clouded mystery, despite the fact that some foreign missions were trying to lit lamps here in the region under study amidst the so called enlightenment and welfare activities there existed illiteracy, ignorance, poverty and social discrimination. Bethany Congregation, the small lamp, lit by Msgr. Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas tried to find light, in the minds and hearts of these ill-fated marginalized people of Karnataka. The native succor proved the best solution for the native problems as against foreign ideologies. The Bethany Congregation enshrined and worshipped the motto of service. The various institutions established by the Bethany Congregation have proved to be an asset not only to the Bethany Congregation but also to the society in far plunged areas. It was the fortune of the Bethany Congregation that it could enjoy the leadership and guidance of Msgr. Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas the founder himself, for four long decades. During this period Msgr. Raymond Mascarenhas saw to the streamlining of the administration of the Bethany Congregation for which a good foundation was laid in the form of a Constitution, which was accepted by the Ecclesial authorities of Roman Catholic Organization, permitted the Bethany Congregation to work independently but under the Mangalore Diocese at the beginning and now it is an independent

Congregation which has come directly under the supervision of the Pope. Here are some of the general conclusions which emerged from our present study.

Firstly, Msgr. Raymond Mascarenhas the son of the soil, and Priest of the Diocese of Mangalore, one among the noted missionaries with a prophetic vision who visualized the dire need of his time in the society, which arose due to the social evils, that created alienation and classes among the people in the region under study. We have also seen Msgr. Raymond Mascarenhas who rose above these social evils and contributed, to bring social change in Karnataka by eradicating illiteracy and liberating the people of the then existing society, from the darkness of ignorance and social injustice by transcending all the then prevailing evils and tried to strike a balance to bring transformation in the society by providing equal opportunities to the people through the formal and non-formal education. Msgr. Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas accomplished this by founding an indigenous institution called Bethany Congregation.

Secondly, we have seen Msgr. Raymond Mascarenhas the founder of Bethany Congregation actualized his dream and translated his vision of liberating the marginalized, the downtrodden specially the women and girls of the remotest villages through the work of Bethany Congregation. This Congregation which was founded in Mangalore in South Canara with the four women had a humble beginning in the native soil and it withstood all the initial struggles; difficulties and hardships of the Infant Congregation under the guidance and advice of Msgr. Raymond Mascarenhas, the founder of Bethany Congregation. Later, Msgr. Raymond Mascarenhas, empowered the Bethany Sisters to take over the administration of the Congregation. We have also observed that, the then existing Congregations in South Canara were of the Foreign Origin, catering to the needs of the upper and upper-middle social classes, whose activities were focused more to the developed towns and cities. Hence, the large segment of the population particularly the villages and the rural areas were deprived of Primary education. Here we also study, the contribution of the Bethany Sisters, who had been empowered in their organization, were now capable of empowering the other

women of the remotest villages, the poor, marginalized and the downtrodden of the society.

Thirdly, we have studied about, a local sisters' Congregation, that came up on the Coast of Karnataka with Mangalore as its headquarters has grown steadily. It spread its activities first along the coast and then to the whole of Karnataka. The educational and social benefits which were given by the Bethany Congregation, attracted different social groups. This enabled the Bethany Sisters, to open their branches throughout the country. Thus the work of Bethany Congregation became a national organization. Today it may look strange, but the ideals of Bethany Congregation, have reached the portals of Rome and Italy and from there it is spreading further to the West, North and south with greater speed and dignity. This, of course, is beyond the perception of Msgr. Raymond Mascarenhas, the founder of Bethany Congregation, yet, the strength he gave to the Bethany Congregation has benefitted it to grow as a very strong International Organization with Mangalore as its National and International Headquarters.

Fourthly, we have surveyed the contribution made by the Bethany Congregation through the Bethany Educational Society, to the poor, the marginalized, the downtrodden, especially the women and the girls, in the remotest villages, first in South Canara, then spread to the other parts of Karnataka. In the twentieth century in Karnataka, Msgr. Raymond Mascarenhas took the initiative to empower women through the Bethany Organization. We have also observed, that Bethany Educational Society, from the beginning has centered round the prospects of women education. Thus, we have seen, that the Bethany Educational Society embraces all, specially the poor, the marginalized, the downtrodden and very specially the women and the girls, in the remotest villages, without any restriction of Caste and Religion.

We also study that the education imparted by Bethany Educational Society, revolves around the principles of values and education for life. Thus it helps to create peace and harmony through inter-personal relationships, having respect for life, nature and culture. We also observed that, though initially Bethany Congregation

concentrated on the basic primary education, later on according to the need it upgraded it in to Secondary and higher education. Seeing the need of having quality teachers, Msgr. Raymond Mascarenhas opened the Teachers' Training Junior Grade School in the beginning to impart the non-formal education and later on the formal education to the pupils. Pupil's teacher as it was upgraded as Teachers Training Senior Grade School. We have also scanned through the history of the schools of Bethany Educational Society which are mostly in the remotest villages of Karnataka and are imparting the education to the poorest of the poor, the marginalized, the downtrodden, specially the women and the girls. We also found out, the contribution made by the Bethany Educational Society, which has made the impact in the field of education through its educational institutions and has become an agent of social change in the remotest villages of Karnataka. Thus we study, that more than three lakhs of pupils have passed out of the educational institutions of the Bethany Educational Society of which, many of them are well placed in the society and in return they contribute to the nation their best as good citizens.

Fifthly, we have studied the contribution made by the Bethany congregation through the non-formal education and social work; concentrating on the poor, the marginalized, the downtrodden specially the women and girls of the remotest villages of Karnataka specially in South Canara keeping in line with the dream of Msgr. Raymond Mascarenhas, the founder of Bethany Congregation. Further we have studied that, the Bethany Congregation has promoted several training programmes in the fields of agriculture and industry; arranged adult education classes, opened vocational training centres and open schools and community colleges were availed for school drop outs. To carry out these activities a separate organization called Bethany social service trust has been established. Further it is noted, that the Bethany Organization believes that in the process of empowering women they themselves get empowered. To move from charitable service to justice commitment is a daring task taken by Bethany Congregation. The transformation from culturally weaker section to socially empowered women is an ongoing struggle. To do this, Bethany Congregation

has joined hence with the, Governmental and Non-Governmental Organization's connected with liberating women, by empowering them in all the spheres of life. In spite of all the various efforts taken by the Bethany Congregation for the empowerment of women, the new problems which continue to emerge everyday are tackled by the Congregation through the Bethany Social Service Trust. Finally we come to a conclusion that empowering women in this modern world is a challenging task.

Thus the study of the ninety years of the History of the Indigenous Bethany Organization founded in 1921 by Msgr. Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas shows that their contribution to transform the society, with the aim of bringing social changes in Karnataka, by incorporating the values in the formal and non-formal education which they have adopted, to liberate the people from illiteracy to literacy, powerlessness to empowerment and to be a voice of the voiceless poor, the marginalized, the downtrodden, specially the women and the girls in the remotest villages in Karnataka by respecting the dignity in diversity and helping them to stand on their own feet and face the challenges of life bravely. To conclude, we see in the Bethany Congregation the motto of service which has given a true native colour in the society and thus, it has transcended beyond the bounds of the nation. As a result, Msgr. Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas and the Bethany Congregation of Mangalore will remain in the minds of the people.