

MISSION APPEAL LETTER

1. Introduction

The diocese of Adilabad situated in the new state of Telangana in India is a rather new diocese, which came into existence in 1999. The diocese of Adilabad comprises of four civil districts of Adilabad, Nirmal, Mancherial and Asifabad in the state of Telangana. It is a mission diocese, spread over an area of 16,210 sq. km, with just 17,000 Catholics out of the total population of 2.7 million. All the four civil districts in the diocese are declared as backward districts by the state government of Telangana. However, people in this area are striving hard to get out of their backwardness and come to the mainstream. The diocese of Adilabad is playing a vital role in developing this area through its remarkable contribution to the society in the fields of education, health care and social empowerment.

2. Basic Statistics and Facts

Area of the Diocese	:16,210 sq.km
Number of civil districts	:4
Total population	:2.74 Million
Catholic Population	:17,000
Number of diocesan priests	:43
Parishes and Mission Centers with Resident Priest	:40
Substations/villages in contact	:193
Number of non-evangelized villages	:1524
Religious Congregations working in Adilabad	:26

2. Social and educational background of the people of diocese of Adilabad¹

The entire area of the diocese of Adilabad is considered as a backward area. According to the recent statistics of NITI Aayog, Adilabad is enlisted as one of the most backward and underdeveloped areas of India. The main reasons for backwardness are illiteracy and

¹ Details in this section are taken from *Census of India 2011, Andhra Pradesh, Series 29, Part XII B, District Census Hand Book Adilabad*, Directorate of Census Operations, Andhra Pradesh, 2011 and *Statistical Year Book 2017*, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Telangana, 2017.

unemployment. A great number of people in Adilabad belong to backward classes and tribal communities. Of the total population, 17.45% belong to SC (Scheduled Castes/Dalits) whereas 19% belong to ST (Scheduled Tribes/Adivasis). Most of the people in this area live on agriculture and daily wages. It is painful to note that the daily wage of a male worker is Rs. 312.5(4.46\$) and that of a female worker is Rs. 262.5 (3.75\$) in the urban area while it is Rs. 166.08 (2.37\$) and Rs. 162.02 (2.31\$) respectively in the rural area. According to a survey published in the national newspaper “The Hindu” on 14 March 2016, Adilabad had the lowest per capita income, i.e. Rs. 76,921 (1098\$), in the whole state of Telangana.

Unfortunately, Adilabad is infamous for illiteracy as only 61% of the population in this area is literate. This area is also noted for high dropout rate. In the schools, the rate of dropout boys is 47.16 % and that of girls is 42.85%. It is heart-breaking to see that 27.9 % of the children between 11-14 years in Adilabad do not attend school and the literacy level of the youth between 15-24 years is 62.2%. Adilabad district stood second registering 44.83 % dropout rate according to a report on 20.07.2016. High illiteracy rate among the girls is another lamentable drawback of this particular area.

3. Ministries Carried out in the Diocese of Adilabad

The first and foremost concern of the Diocese of Adilabad is to preach the Gospel. The greatest dream of the Diocese of Adilabad is to reach out to all the villages that have not yet heard the Good News. All the activities that the Diocese of Adilabad is carrying out are oriented to this goal. We aim at integral evangelization, which embraces every aspect of human life. Thus, to educate the poor and marginalized children in Adilabad and to work for a better society devoid of superstitions, discriminations and corruption are considered not as activities unconnected with evangelization, but as integral part of it. In order to achieve our goal of integral evangelization, we conduct programs such as village preaching, Bible conventions, home visits, BCC prayer meetings, establishment of new Catholic communities, human promotion activities, housing project for the homeless people, hostels

for the poor and disadvantaged children, tuition classes in the remote villages, shelter home for the disabled and elderly people, women empowerment activities, care for HIV patients etc.

4. Particular Need of the Time

The diocese is running 16 hostels for the poor and marginalized children with the help of several benefactors and agencies. However, we are struggling to provide all the facilities to the children staying in these hostels. One of the most important needs is bed and mattress for the children. With our own resources we have been able to provide bed and mattress to only 200 children. Rest of the children still sleep on the floor with thin mats, which is very uncomfortable and unhealthy. Although it is very common in this area, sleeping on the cold floor in the winter causes different diseases to the children. Moreover, in certain villages scorpions and insects sting the children while sleeping on the floor in the rainy season. Therefore, we would like to protect the poor children from this vulnerable situation by providing with bed and mattress. This mission appeal is intended to raise funds for this purpose. The funds that will be eventually collected will be used for providing the hostel children with bed and mattress.

5. Conclusion

We are very grateful to the Diocese of Columbus and the parish of St Joan of Arc Church, (10700 Liberty Rd, Powell, OH 43065 – 7681) for giving us a chance to make a mission appeal even in this difficult time. It is so kind of you that you have decided to accept a remote mission appeal despite the constraints caused by Covid - 19. It is a great help for us in this difficult time as we do not have sufficient local resources to carry out the above-mentioned project.

Thanking you most sincerely and assuring you of our prayers,
Yours devotedly in Jesus Christ,

+ Prince Antony
Bishop of Adilabad