

STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT OF INDIA

Report of the project of “Christian Youth Initiative to Re-Read Media: Gender and Media Justice”

ACTIVITIES:

A. National Programmes:

Student Christian Movement of India organised a National Workshop on “Gender and Media Justice” at the SCMI Programme Centre on 19th – 21st October 2007. There were 40 students and senior friends from all over the country, who are now the members of the SCMI Media Watch Group. The workshop began with an inaugural worship and a keynote address from one of the most prominent persons in media, Ms. Ammu Joseph. We also had sessions on “Introduction to Media” by Rev. Dr. Sham P. Thomas, “Influence of Media” by Ms. Vari, “Portrayal of Media” by Dr. Sakuntala Narasimhan, and “Media Advocacy” by Fr. S. Jayanathan. We also had a Bible Study from Dr. Hrang Thanchhungi.



The objective of the workshop is to impart media education to the students and to enable them to critically watch over media, from gender perspective. We emphasised mainly on print media, including newspapers, journals and electronic media like televisions and movies. At the end of the workshop, we formed a Media Watch Group, where all the participants were members. We were divided into three groups to focus on three different



aspects of Media: Newspaper, Journals and Movies. After we go back to our own regions, we decided to collect clippings on the advertisement and editorial sections of newspapers and journals of our own region/states, and movies. We shall give critical reflection and respond to them in order to create a just media, especially from women’s perspective.

B. Regional Programmes:

a) Andhra Pradesh Region: “Women in Media: It’s Impact on Youth and Society”

Three-day workshop on media focusing gender issues was jointly organized by the SCMI-AP and ACTC, Hyderabad. Eminent resource persons from media, women’s movement,

seminaries and universities have given new insights and made students aware of the gender discrimination, politics in media, promoting women in media and also re- reading bible in gender perspective.



Mrs. Lalita Iyer, (Director, The Week Magazine and Malayala Manorama for Andhra Pradesh Region) and Mrs. R. Akhileshwari, (Special Correspondent, Deccan Herald) delivered the keynote address. They focused on image and portrayal of women in media, media dynamics, politics in media and made the participants to understand the whole notion

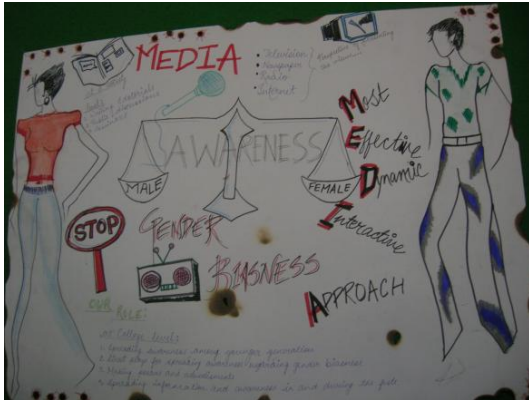
of discrimination of women in media, media literacy and media awareness and stereotypes.

We had sessions on “Violence on Women in Media” by Ms. Sajaya, “Christian Youth to Re-Read Media” by Rev Reuben Mark and “Women and Media” by Dr. Padmaja Shaw (Head of the department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Osmania University). We also had several Bible Studies from Rev. Dr. Vasantha Rao, Rev. Vijaya Kumari Joseph, Rev. Dr. Sampurna Rao. There was also a group discussion, where the students reflected on the sessions on the previous days and the exposure. The workshop ended with a plenary session and a closing worship.

b) South Tamil Nadu Region: “Communication and Christian Leadership”

A three days seminar was organised to introduce media awareness programme to the students, to critically analyse media and learn how to participate creatively as Christian leaders in media. The seminar was held in Kodaikanal, at Green Hands Youth Hostel and there were 38 participants from 8 units within the region. We had eminent resource persons like Rev. Dr. Gnanavaram, Mr. Ponmudiraj and Dr. Dinakarlal. We were also blessed by the presence of Rev. Stephen Heap from the United Kingdom. Mr. Ponmudiraj talked about Christian leadership and its distinctiveness from other kinds of leadership. He spoke on the meaning of communication, communication barriers and the importance of leadership in communication. He concluded by talking about the importance of “Media Watch Group”. Rev. Dr. Gnanavaram led an interesting and eye-opening Bible Study from the perspective of Communication. We also had interesting group discussions during the workshop on how SCMs can communicate to people of other faiths, how SCM can make the best use of communication channels and technology, the role and responsibility of Media Watch Group and how modern communication system play media politics and how to end this trend. Lastly, Dr. Dinakarlal spoke on the relationship between SCM and Christian Leadership.

c) West Bengal Region: “The Role of Media in Understanding Gender Biasness in Society”



The West Bengal Region organised a three days workshop on 23rd – 25th November 2007 at Seva Kendra, Kolkata. The keynote speaker, Fr. Gaston Roberge (St. Xavier’s College, Media Department) introduced the theme by emphasized on the study of Old Empire, especially the British Empire and its characters and the New Empire, the Empire of Mind and its characters, and how invisibly it controls us. He said that the Empire controls the Media and the Media controls us, and also explain how media can be also used to fight against Empire.

He finished up his Keynote Address by explaining the case study of Barbie Icon and the erotic symbolism of Women as Barbie Icon.

There were also sessions on “Media and Gender Justice” by Fr. George Ponodoth (EMRC St. Xavier’s College) and “How Print Media and Electronic Media Presents Gender Biasness” by Fr. Robin Gomes (Researcher and Media Analyses, Don Bosco Nitika). There were also Bible studies, devotions, group discussions and reflections.

At the end of the workshop, the participants filled up the sketched hands with flowers, in a circle as a vow/pledge and to stand for Gender Bias in the Society. It can be Women and Men or the distinction can be among Women and Women, Men and Men, but both should unite and fight for Gender Bias and should participate in Media.



C. Unit Programmes:

United Theological College:

The SCMI Unit of UTC, Bangalore organised a one day workshop on “Media and Youth” on 15th August 2007 at the UTC Campus. The objectives of the workshop were to understand Media and its societal role, to create awareness on the influence of Media on Youth and Christian attitude towards Media. Experts in the field of Media and Youth like Ms. Ammu Joseph, Rev. Dr. Sham P. Thomas were the resource persons for this day