

**kolping**  
**INDIA**  
*Connects*



ISSUE 4 : JANUARY – DECEMBER 2024

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## FROM THE DESK OF NATIONAL DIRECTOR,

My affectionate Kolping Sisters and brothers  
Greetings from Kolping India,

I am delighted to connect with you through Kolping India Connects e-News, which keeps you informed of our programs and events across India. Among several development initiatives, the efforts to address the issues of climate change is the focal point of our action in the context of extreme weather events witnessed in the recent past in India. Unseasonal rains, flashing floods, and landslides have become a common phenomenon in India. The life-threatening climate change events in 2024 remind us of our collective responsibility to initiate impact mitigation and get into action to restore human friendly environment and protect the ecology for the sustainable life of the future generation. Recognizing the utmost need of the hour as stimulated by the words of Blessed Adolph Kolping, “The needs of the time will teach you what to do”, Kolping India has introduced numerous activities to protect ‘Our Mother Earth’ with resolute confidence in the ability of Kolping Members that they would make a difference in the society. Southern States of India experienced a few disasters in 2024.

Responding to the need of the time, Kolping India undertook emergency relief work among the flood-affected communities in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh. Kolping India, while engaging in relief activities witnessed a remarkable resilience of the marginalised communities in dealing with adversities.

Secondly, the election to Kolping India National Family Association which ultimately led to the election of members for the Kolping India National Board demonstrated the vibrant grassroot democracy and leadership qualities at various levels of Kolping India Social Structures.

Thirdly, our coordination meeting in December 2024 at Joe Beach Resort with input sessions and merrymaking was a different experience and it was instrumental to cement and reaffirm our ‘one family’ bond beyond barriers.

I hope you would enjoy reading Kolping India Connects which covers wide range of activities undertaken by Kolping India in 2024.

With Love and Regards

**Dr. Mari**

National Director

Kolping India

## KOLPING INDIA NATIONAL COORDINATION MEETING



Kolping India organises Coordination Meetings regularly for the Collaborating Partner Organisations, who support Kolping India in implementing development projects among the marginalised communities. The Coordination meeting brings the Diocesan Kolping Directors and coordinators together on a common platform to share the progress of projects under implementation, discuss emerging trends in development sector, evolve context-specific strategies and generating synergies in accomplishing the expected results.

The two days coordination meeting for the Collaborating Partner Organisations (CPOs) of Kolping India was organised on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at ICSA Paripurna Centre, Chennai. The Directors and coordinators of Collaborating Partner Organisation participated in the two days meeting. Dr. Maria Soosai, National Director, Kolping India welcomed the participants and briefed the two days program. The Directors and Kolping Project Coordinators, who were new to the Kolping India National Forum introduced themselves to the rest of the participants. Kolping India was pleased to have on-board the Diocesan new Kolping Directors, namely, Fr. S.J. Savarimuthu from Trichy, Fr. Maria Joseph from Sultanpet, Fr. Saiju Simon from Quilon and Fr. Jerome from Marthandam, and the Kolping Coordinators Ms. Jhansi Rani from Hyderabad, Ms. Rayi Gowramma from Srikakulam and Mr. Arun from Kannur.



On behalf of Kolping India National Family Association, Fr. Alfred, Director of Jeevana felicitated Dr. Maria Soosai for his recent elevation to the Kolping International Executive Board. Dr. Maria Soosai was elected unanimously to the International Executive Board in the Kolping International Board of Directors meeting held on September 29, 2023, in Bensberg, Germany.

Subsequently, the Kolping Project Coordinators presented the Kolping development activities implemented in their respective regions in the year 2023. The presentation was focused on the results achieved; challenges faced during the project implementation and context specific creative initiatives. The lively presentations were followed by question and answer session, which had sharpened the insights of the participants on Kolping India Projects.

Taking into account the dynamic nature of societal needs, the Dr. Maria Soosai, National Director invited the participants to reflect on the pressing socio-economic problems that warrants the intervention of Kolping India in the 2024. The participants were divided into groups to discuss the issues in detail. All the groups highlighted drug or substance Abuse as a disturbing social problem and the groups sought for a concerted and urgent development intervention from Kolping India to sensitize the ill effect of drug abuse. The groups further elaborated on levels of intervention, methodologies and activities that needed to be considered towards addressing the issue. The group exercise helped to prioritise the issues for intervention of Kolping India in 2024.

The Kolping Regions that mobilised donations to Kolping Disaster Emergency Relief Fund were recognised. While handing over mementos to the Kolping Regions, the National Director appreciated the efforts of the Directors and Kolping Coordinators for their contribution to Kolping Disaster Emergency Relief Fund.



Concluding the two days of coordination meeting, Dr. Maria Soosai thanked all the Directors and Coordinators of the CPOs for making the Coordination meeting lively and more meaningful through their active interaction.

## KOLPING INDIA FLOOD RELIEF OPERATION



**SAIDAPET, CHENNAI**

Kolping India had responded swiftly to mitigate the suffering of the people, who encountered heavy loss of property due to Michaung Cyclone. Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh was battered by Michaung Cyclone between 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023. Unprecedented rain ravaged human lives and livelihood of millions of people. Houses were damaged in Chennai, and many hectares of agriculture field and crops were submerged in flood in the rural areas.

Immediately after cyclone Michaung, in a gap of ten days heavy rains battered Chennai and the districts of Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Tenkasi, and Kanyakumari on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023, bringing life to a standstill and causing massive inundation. Kolping India team surveyed the situation in and around the affected areas. The team identified the truly affected people living in slums, riverbanks settlements that were neglected by the Government relief operations. While selecting the communities, Kolping India had chosen locations where Kolping Families were present among the affected communities.

However, the relief materials were distributed to Kolping members and all other affected families irrespective of their association with Kolping India. The required relief materials for distribution were procured in bulk, well packed at the National office and was taken to the affected areas for distribution. The relief kit distributed by Kolping India comprised of a Blanket, Saree, Dothi, Lungi, Turkey towel and Ordinary towel. Each of these items were best of quality available in the market. The distribution of relief kit was done on a phased manner, first completing the relief operation in Chennai and Chengalpattu districts, then the team moved to other districts like Tirunelveli, Tuticorin and Kanyakumari. The Kolping Collaborating Partner Organisations extended the required support for Kolping India to organise the distribution smoothly. Overall, 2500 families in Chennai, Chengalpattu, Tirunelveli, Tuticorin and Kanyakumari were supported with the relief kits.



21 JAN 2024, NAGERCOIL



20 JAN 2024, TIRUNELVELI



18 DEC 2023, MEENAMBAKKAM, CHENNAI



15 FEB 2024, TUTICORIN

## Kolping India – EBARA India CSR Initiative



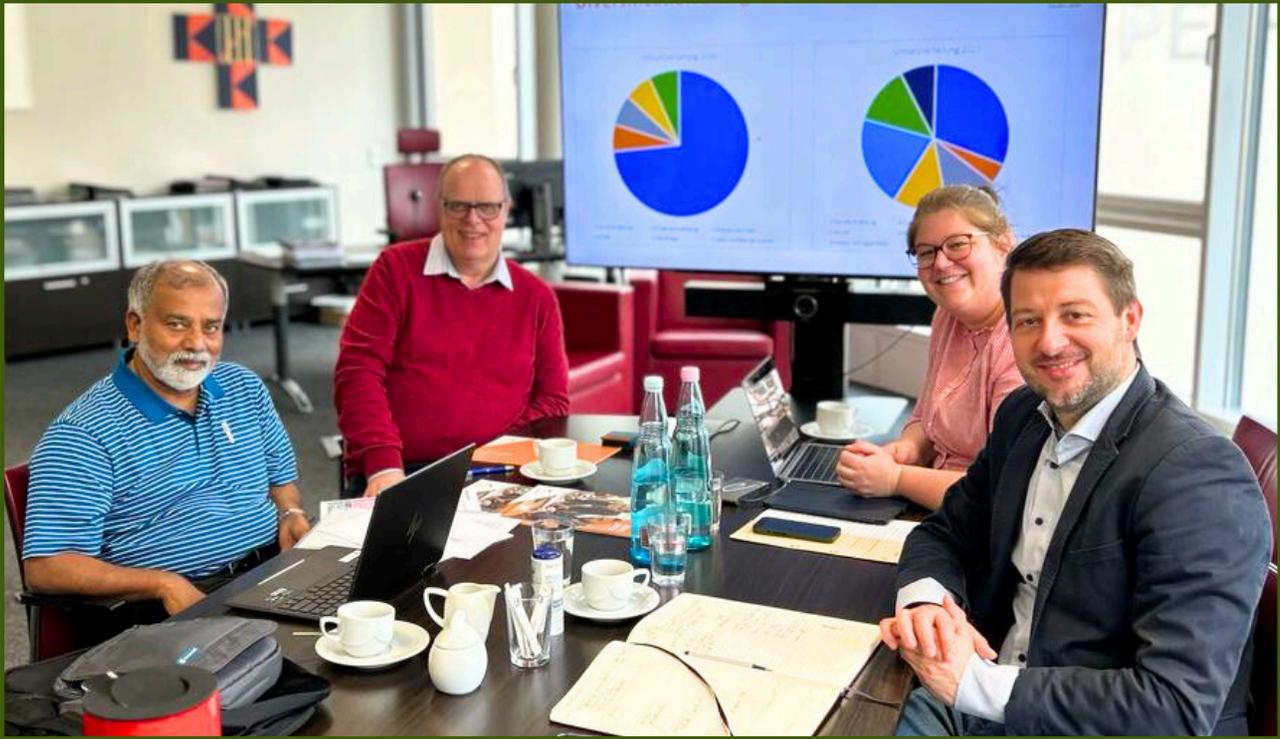
Networking with Ebara India had helped Kolping members belonging to Narikuravar Community at Pallavaram to procure the needed raw materials to improve their livelihood. Inspired by the work of Kolping India among the most marginalised sections of the society, Ebara India, a leading manufacturer of domestic and industrial pumps came forward to collaborate with Kolping India to improve the lives of Narikuravar community as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility.

Mr. Masunobu Onozawa, Managing Director along with his colleagues from Ebara India Mr. Shamon Jacob, Vice President, Mr. Arul Gandhi, Senior. Manager, Mr. Ramesh and Mr. Ashok Kumar from Sales Team interacted with the members of the Narikuravar Community on 21<sup>st</sup> February and learnt from them the nuances of making fancy and crafted items, which they sell it in public places.

After the interactive session, Mr. Masunobu Onozawa distributed raw materials required for making fancy and crafted items to 6 Kolping members.

Mekala, one of the six beneficiaries was delighted to have received the financial assistance from Ebara India for making colourful beads and earrings. She said, "*Infusion of additional funds into my income generation activity from Japan company (Ebara) had given me more liberty to add new products without being constrained by the small profits I got from my routine sales*".

Speaking at the occasion Dr. Maria Soosai, National Director explained the work of Kolping India among the Narikuravar Community in the past and said, "*Ebara had been a friendly neighbour to Kolping India, and wished the collaboration with Ebara India continued*".



### **New collaboration in the Offing**

Dr. Maria Soosai, National Director as part of his visit to Germany in March 2024, discussed the prospects for Indian Nurses to gain employment in Health Care sector in Germany. The earlier discussions via video conference between Kolping India, Kolping Paderborn and Kolping International was productive, leading to a possible tripartite collaboration between the three organisations for the above stated purpose. Moving forward, Dr. Maria Soosai had discussion with Ms. Ramona Linder and Mr. Thorsten Schulz, representing Kolping GmbH, a unit of Kolping Paderborn along with Mr. Gregor, Kolping International at the office of Kolping Paderborn, Germany. Later that day, Dr. Maria Soosai visited a day care centre for senior citizens to understand the functioning of health care system in Germany. On the following days, Dr. Maria Soosai participated in Kolping International Executive Board Meeting held at Cologne in Germany.

### **PROJECT VISITS**

As part of periodical monitoring visits and handholding support to Collaborating Partner Organisations (CPOs), the National Director and the National Office staff team visited Trichy, Punalur, Calicut, Kuzhithurai, Kottar, Tirunelveli, Vellore, Bangalore, and Eluru Kolping Regions. The highlight of the visit was the discussion with District/ Diocese Level Kolping Federation (DLKF) members and interaction with project beneficiaries. At every meeting with DLKF members,

the core philosophy of Blessed Adolph Kolping and essence of 'Family' concept was reiterated. The reinforcement of fundamental values on which Kolping India National Family Association was built was found to be necessary for Kolping members to stay connected as a 'One Family', despite the differences. The meeting with the Directors and Kolping Project Coordinators helped Kolping India National Team to understand the field reality and develop context specific interventions in the region.



### Trichy Kolping (2<sup>nd</sup> April 2024)

Dr. Maria Soosai, the National Director discussed the status of Kolping membership and reviewed the status of Kolping India projects implemented in Trichy Kolping. The scope for increasing the membership among deserving communities in Trichy

Kolping area was discussed. The National Director appreciated Fr. Savarimuthu, Director, Tiruchirappalli Multipurpose Social Service Society (TMSSS) and the Diocesan Director of Kolping for his efforts towards streamlining the communication thereby further strengthening the relationship between TMSSS and Kolping India.



### Punalur Kolping (3<sup>rd</sup> April 2024)

At a meeting held with Msg. Vincent D'cruz, Director of Punalur Kolping, the discussion revolved around increasing the membership at Punalur. The National Director assured all possible support to creative initiatives at Punalur Kolping towards enrolling new members.

### Quilon Kolping (3<sup>rd</sup> April 2024)



At a meeting with members of District Level Kolping Federation (DLKF), which was recently elected at Quilon Kolping, the National Director emphasised the distinct character of Kolping Family Associations which is different from the Self-Help Groups. He also offered to support the new DLKF members to visit Kottar Kolping for an exposure visit to gain insights on the functioning of Kolping Family Associations and Federation structures. Fr. Saiju Simon, Director of Quilon Social Service Society welcomed the idea of an exposure visits to well performing DLKFs that would help the newly elected DLKF at Quilon Kolping to learn and emulate best practices.

## Kuzhithurai Kolping (4<sup>th</sup> April 2024)



Dr. Maria Soosai, the National Director met Most Rev. Msgr. Albert George Alexander Anastas, Bishop of Kuzhithurai Diocese and apprised him the support of Kolping India to Kolping to Kuzhithurai Kolping. Like Quilon, Kuzhithurai Kolping too had a newly constituted District Level Kolping Federation (DLKF), who were invited for an interactive session with Kolping India National team. Fr. John Michael Raj gave a brief overview of Kolping activities in Kuzhithurai Kolping. After a round of self-introduction by the new DLKF members, the discussion revolved around the roles and responsibilities of DLKF members, and the development work taken up in Kuzhithurai Kolping. The members presented the activities of Kolping Family Associations particularly on the theme of organic farming, kitchen garden and waste management. The National Director in his speech said that Kolping India had been focusing on women centric development, empowering women with information and knowledge for individual growth and community development as Kolping members predominantly women with 93 per cent of membership. He further said, a person with information makes right decision. Kolping India projects attempt to provide the necessary conditions to empower women in decision making positions both in family and social setting.

## Kottar Kolping (4<sup>th</sup> April 2024)



The meeting of Kottar Kolping District Level Kolping Federation (DLKF) members started with a prayer song followed by a welcome speech by Fr. Antroose, Director of Kottar Kolping. The DLKF members highlighted the development work taken up by the Kolping Family Associations in their respective villages and explained the functioning of DLKF in addressing larger community issues.

### Tirunelveli Kolping (5<sup>th</sup> April 2024)



In the meeting with Fr. Francis Xavier, Director of Tirunelveli Social Service Society (TSSS), the National Director discussed the status of Kolping membership in Tirunelveli Kolping. He offered all possible support from Kolping India to increase the membership. Mr. Devasagayam, the newly appointed coordinator was present during the meeting.

### Vellore Kolping (15<sup>th</sup> April 2024)



The National Director appreciated the efforts of Fr. James, Director and the Mr. Yesu Kumar, the Project Coordinator for increasing the membership at Vellore Kolping and for streamlining the project management at Vellore Kolping area. The status of the projects implemented by Kolping India in Vellore Region was discussed. This was followed by an interaction with two Kolping groups from Pallalakuppam village, who had come forward to start a Collective Income Generation Project. The proposed activity of renting of articles for family and social functions discussed on parameters such as feasibility and viability of the activity. The National Director said that the project was approved by Kolping India and assured to support subsequently if the group performed well in the business.

### Bangalore Kolping (22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024)

Fr. Santhosh, Director of Bangalore Multipurpose Social Service Society (BMSSS) briefed the visiting team about Kolping Projects implemented in three clusters of Bangalore region. The visiting Kolping India team had an interaction with over 40 members representing 5 Kolping Associations functioning in and around Jaya Nagar. The members were gathered at Christha Prabhalaya Epiphany Church, Jaya Nagar. The sharing of members at the meeting revealed the need for re-orientation of members on the fundamentals of the Kolping Family Association. Concluding the monitoring, The National Team discussed the status of Kolping Projects in Bangalore Region with Most Rev. Dr. Peter Machado, Bishop of Bangalore.



### Eluru Kolping (14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024)



The National Director appreciated the efforts of Fr. Immanuel, Director of The Social Service Centre, Diocese of Eluru in forming Kolping Family Association adding 180 new members in the diocesan area. Later during an interaction with Kolping members organised at Johneshpuram village, over 25 members from 6 different Kolping Family Associations in and around Johneshpuram participated in the meeting. A few members, who availed schemes from Kolping India project, narrated the socio-economic transformation that project brought in their life. The National Director in his speech emphasised the 'Family' concept which made Kolping groups distinct from other self-help groups.

## MR. GREGOR'S VISIT TO KOLPING INDIA



Mr. Gregor, Kolping International Coordinator as part of his four-day visit to Kolping India, interacted with the Kolping Family Association Members at Narikuravar Colony at Pallavaram on 02<sup>nd</sup> May 2024. The members shared their experience and the benefits they enjoyed, being a Kolping member. The community was overwhelmed to have a foreign visitor amidst them and shared their feeling of being part of Kolping World-wide Community. Mr. Gregor, explained the work of Kolping International and said that although he visited Chennai many times in the past, he had the opportunity to visit the Narikuravar community at Pallavaram for the first time. The members showed the fancy items, ornaments and decoration materials they produced and sell for their living. The community has now started integrating with mainstream society, proving a tangible shift in their social dynamics.

## Kolping Society of Sri Lanka – 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024



Dr. Maria Soosai visited Sri Lanka for the second time as part of the strategic plan to revitalise Kolping Society of Sri Lanka. The visit last year along with Mr. Markus Demele, General Secretary was in October 2023 which provided the needed direction for Kolping Society of Sri Lanka to revive Kolping activities in Sri Lankan soil. The follow-up visit included interactions with Kolping Family Association members at Thannamunai, Thalaimannar, Mannar and Madukkarai. As part of the visit, a workshop was facilitated jointly by Dr Maria Soosai and Mr. Gregor, Kolping International for the Members of National Kolping Association, Sri Lanka.

During the visit it was evident that the members were able to sustain the spirit of Kolping and has exhibited a strong desire to reorganise themselves to function as a more vibrant Kolping National Association. The visiting team also met Rt.Rev.Dr. Christian Noel Emmanuel, the Bishop of Trincomalee Diocese and Rt.Rev.Dr. Fedelis Lionel Emmanuel Fernando, the Bishop of Mannar Diocese and discussed with them on the possibilities of starting Kolping Family Associations in their respective dioceses. Dr. Maria Soosai and Mr. Gregor explained the Kolping activities across the globe among the marginalized communities through

knowledge building, skill development and support for economic development. The meeting was productive in clarifying the basic functioning of Kolping Family Associations and the Bishops had offered to support the activities of Kolping Society of Sri Lanka in their respective dioceses. Field visits and meetings with Kolping members highlighted the need for continuous handholding support from Kolping International and the dire need of the development intervention among Kolping members in Sri Lanka.

### **NATIONAL LEVEL COORDINATION MEETING OF KOLPING INDIA PARTNER ORGANISATIONS**



Kolping India National level Coordination meeting was held at ICSA, Manapakkam, Chennai on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> July 2024. The central theme of the two days deliberation was “Sustainability and Relevance of Kolping India Project Initiatives”. The National Director welcomed all the Directors and Coordinators of the Collaborating partner organizations and expressed his appreciation for their cooperation and support. He introduced the new Directors from Chengalpattu, Guntur, and Ooty, as well as the New Coordinators from Tirunelveli, Hyderabad, and Kurnool, who were attending their first Kolping India National Level Program.



**MR. CHRISTY AMBROSE, HANDLED THE SESSION ON PROJECT RELEVANCE**

Mr. Christy Ambrose, Development Consultant handled the session on Project Relevance and Organizational Sustainability. He said that few decades ago, NGOs were much stronger in grassroot level community work. NGOs played an indispensable role in civil society with churches taking responsibility for providing essential services and building community resilience.

NGOs contributed significantly to the well-being and development of civil society, and their efforts were recognized and appreciated. However, over the years, corporate and governments had encroached on the space traditionally held by NGOs. As a result, the role of NGOs diminished, and they now face significant challenges that hindered their ability to carry out their work effectively.

He explained the strategies to make both the organisation and its project relevant and underscored the need to think of organisational and project sustainability. He concluded his session stating that by carefully choosing effective strategies, we could enhance the relevance of our projects, ensure the project meet stakeholders needs, address key challenges, and contribute to the overall success of the organizations.

The session was lively and interactive as the topic was more pertinent to the current socio-economic conditions. In the afternoon session, the Collaborating Partner Organisations were divided into 3 groups and presented their views and actions on the prescribed questions.



Poster Competition 1<sup>st</sup> prize – Cochin Kolping



Value Added Product 1<sup>st</sup> Prize - Kottar Kolping



Poster Competition 2<sup>nd</sup> prize – Kuzhithurai Kolping



Value Added Product 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize - Thanjavur Kolping



Poster Competition 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize Warangal Kolping



Value added product 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize - Ooty Kolping

In the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> day, Dr. Maria Soosai, the National Director in the presence of Mr. Cyril, the National President distributed prizes to the winners of the competition held during the National Level Coordination Meeting in June 2023. The best exhibits under the category a) Best Posters and b) Best Value-Added Product, were awarded. All the 33 collaborating Partner Organisations who participated in the competition were recognised with Mementos.

## AsiKA Meeting



The Asian Continental Level Meeting of National Kolping Family Associations was held at Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam from 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2024. Delegates from 7 Asian countries along with representatives from Kolping International, Germany participated.

On behalf of Kolping India, Mr. Cyril and Ms. Rita and Mr. Ronald Sabastian participated. The three days meeting was chaired by Dr. Maria Soosai, member of Kolping International Executive Board.

As the host Kolping National Association, the President of Kolping Vietnam Mr John Pham, officially opened the meeting with a welcome note. Dr. Markus Demelle, General Secretary of Kolping International in his opening remarks said, “our future is bright” and continued that AsiKA was a forum for Kolping brothers and sisters representing Kolping in Asia. He hinted upon the recent positive developments happening in Kolping Vietnam, Kolping Indonesia and Kolping Sri Lanka. Dr. Maria Soosai said that AsiKA could play a critical role in the current socio-economic condition.



Before beginning of every session during the 3 days program, each participating nation had described the item they brought with them that symbolized their Kolping National Associations. Dr. Hildegard, AsiKA Coordinator facilitated an icebreaker, which helped the participants to know each other better. Before departing to Thanh Da Church for the opening Holy Mass, the participants were quick to organise the exhibit materials that they brought in from their respective countries, in and around the training hall for the next day event. Every participating country put their posters on the wall around, and displayed products prepared by their Kolping members or Kolping Associations. The evening was made memorable by the enticing cultural performance presented by Kolping Family Association of Saigon.

The second day meeting started with a hymn by Ms. Rita followed by a prayer from Mr. Cyril. After a recap of the previous day proceeding by Mr. Paulce from Kolping Indonesia, the participants moved around visiting the exhibition. The representatives explained the work of Kolping in their countries and clarified the queries of the visitors.

Later in the afternoon, the participants were divided into two groups. Group 1 focused on Strategies for New Members and Group 2 discussed about Building Kolping Youth Structures. The content discussed in the groups were presented in the larger forum where new insights, best practices and successful strategies were recognised.



Dr. Hildegard summarised sessions with soliciting suggestions from the participants to take forward the AsiKA coordination meeting in future. Dr. Hildegard said that the recommendations made by the participants would be discussed further with the Kolping International Executive Board.

Mr. Gregor spoke on the topic Labour Migration. He said that Germany had a long history of supporting Migrants and the topic was closely connected to the early work of Blessed Adolph Kolping.

He also referred to the ongoing skilled migration projects and discussions initiated by Kolping India, Kolping Mexico and Kolping Vietnam to facilitate smooth and fair flow of migrants into Germany. Late in the evening, the AsiKA delegates participated in the Holy Mass at Phu Long Parish Church. The 3 days program had indeed reignited the spirit of Kolping and is expected to take AsiKA to the next level of active engagement among the Asian Kolping National Family Associations.

## REORIENTATION TO 'KOLPING WAY' IN INDIA



A two-day reorientation training to Kolping project coordinators was organized at YWCA Anandagiri in Ooty on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2024. Dr. Maria Soosai, National Director said that it was essential for an organization to periodically review its current perspectives and reflect on future directions, considering the scope and opportunities available. He posed three questions to the participants

- 1. Where are we now?** What is our present status in terms of operations, resources and impact?
- 2. Where do we want to be?** What is our vision for the future? How do we see our role and impact evolving?
- 3. How will we get there?** What strategies and actions are necessary to achieve our vision and transition from our current state to our desired future?

In particular, he emphasized the important role played by Kolping project coordinators in transforming lives among the marginalized community groups. Dr. Maria Soosai outlined the historical perspective of the Kolping in India and provided a refined definition which states, 'Kolping is a community-based Catholic organization dedicated to embodying the values and teachings of Christ and the social teachings of the Church As a social association,

Kolping reflects the lived faith experience of Blessed Adolph Kolping through its family-oriented approach. The organization employs a self-help strategy and operates dynamically, continuously adapting to meet the needs of marginalized communities with context specific interventions. Kolping remains responsive to emerging challenges. He, then explicated the guiding principles of Kolping:

- **It is a Family:** Built on specific shared values
- **Collective Discernment:** Developing one heart and mind
- **Discreet Identity Creation:** Identifying the needy, their needs, issues, and resources
- **Collective Decision:** Mutual support
- **Working for the Common Good:** Sensitive to the signs of the times

Dr. Maria Soosai emphasized that by integrating these principles, a community can effectively navigate both current and future challenges, while staying true to its core values. He further explained the focus areas of Kolping interventions:

• **Formation of Kolping Family Associations:**

Membership association structures and the Kolping India National Board

• **Nurturing and Sustaining Family Associations:**

Through periodical visits, dissemination of knowledge, and interaction

• **Catering to the Development Needs:**

Using appropriate methodologies and mechanisms in areas such as education measures, economic development, and social wellbeing By focusing on these areas, Kolping Family Associations would be effectively supported, fostering a strong sense of Social Family and addressing their educational, economic, and social needs in a sustainable manner. After the input session, the participants were divided into three groups. Each group was tasked with preparing training modules based on the content discussed. All participants excellently contributed to evolve a framework of the training modules. The participants suggested for a follow-up session with selected representatives from the participants to develop a complete set of training modules, which could be used for future training programs. Followed by the training program, the Kolping India program team interacted with members of Gudalur Kolping Federation and Kolping groups involved in Income Generation Activities.





Six young members from Kolping India had the memorable lifetime experience as they joined 22 other youths from South Africa, Hungary, and Germany at the International Kolping Youth Conference, held in Germany from 16<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> September 2024. The youth delegates from Kolping India with Mr. Paul Calap, Program Support Officer took part in a multicultural youth exchange under the theme "Four Nations - One World." Organized by Kolping Augsburg. The conference was packed with activities promoting leadership, cultural exchange, and discussions on sustainable development goals.

The journey began with a warm reception from Youth members of Kolping Augsburg as the Indian delegates reached Munich Airport. From there, a whirlwind 10-day program unfolded, which was loaded with interactive workshops, lively discussions, tours and site seeing, and cultural evenings. The first day kicked off with a tour to Kolping Augsburg campus, where ice-breaking games quickly helped everyone to know each other. The day wrapped up with an international quiz evening, with mixed teams testing their knowledge and learning about different cultures. The session also included meeting with representatives from the board of the Kolping Society Diocesan Association of Augsburg.

The workshops on "Sustainable Action: Our Environment, Our Responsibility" at the Kolping Allgäuhaus in Wertach, dealt with hands-on activities like making natural cosmetics, garbage collection campaign. Subsequently, discussion was organized on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Sunday brought a unique cultural experience with a visit to the Alpine City Museum in Sonthofen. The day ended on a high note with an Indian cultural evening that astonished the group with vibrant clothing, rhythmic dances, and the spicy aromas of home-cooked Indian food. The Indian delegates proudly showcased their culture, sharing their heritage and the development work of Kolping India with the youth participants from other 3 countries.

One of the highlights was the trip to Oberstdorf, where the Indian youth had an opportunity to meet German youth delegates who had visited India in 2014. Together, they enjoyed a scenic cable car ride to snow-capped mountains and participated in a Sunday Mass held outdoors.

A visit to the Kolping Museum in Kerpen gave the participants to connect deeper with the life and legacy of Adolph Kolping. The group interacted with the General Praeses during the visit to Kolping International Office in Cologne. The conference ended with a holy mass at the Minorite Church in Cologne.

## WAYANAD LANDSLIDE & FLOOD



In response to the devastating landslides that hit Wayanad in Kerala, Kolping India provided relief to over 700 families in the Kalpetta area. The landslides, triggered by heavy monsoon rains, claimed over 400 lives, with many more reported missing.

Mr. Paul Calap, Program Support Officer from Kolping India visited the affected areas and collected first-hand information from the field with



Relief distribution at Wayanad

the support of Ms. Helene, Kolping Project Coordinator from Sultanpet, and Fr. Alfred, Director, CDSSS and Ms. Vinitha, Kolping Project Coordinator. The other organisations who had been involved in the relief work and the type of support they had been rendering was also considered while planning the relief measure of Kolping India. Based on the felt need of the affected, Kolping India focused on providing clothing materials to the affected members from Kolping Family Associations.

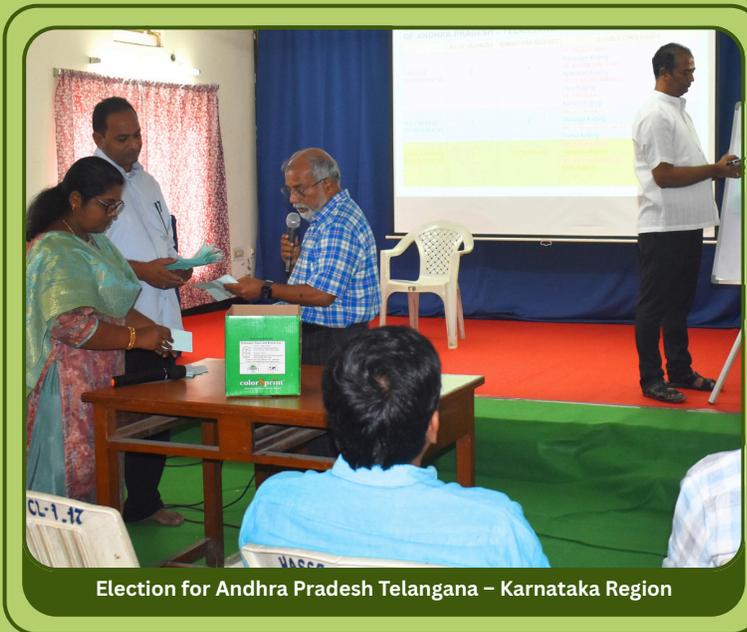
In Collaboration with Calicut Social Service Society (CSSS), the relief materials were distributed to 700 families on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2024. During the distribution, Dr. Maria Soosai, National Director of Kolping India, expressed that this support was a small gesture in the face of such overwhelming adversities. He conveyed the message that they were not alone and reassured the victims that "Kolping Cares" for them. The National Director further extended his gratitude to Fr. Alfred and his team for their efficient coordination of the relief efforts.

Kolping India extended similar support to flood affected families in the Ooty and Eluru regions. Relief kits were distributed in collaboration with the Udhagamandalam Social Service Society and The Social Service Centre (SSC) of the Diocese of Eluru. Special appreciation to Dr. John Joseph Stanis, Director USSS and Fr. Immanuel, SSC, Eluru and their teams, for their cooperation to Kolping India team to reach out to the deserving.



Relief distribution at Udhagamandalam

## ORIENTATION PROGRAM AND ELECTION TO KOLPING INDIA NATIONAL BOARD



Election for Andhra Pradesh Telangana – Karnataka Region



Election for Kerala Region

Kolping India orientation program was organised at State level for the representatives of District Level Kolping Federations (DLKFs) on 22 October 2024 for Andhra Pradesh Telangana – Karnataka Region, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024 for Tamil Nadu Region and 25<sup>th</sup> October 2024 for Kerala Region.

Dr. Maria Soosai, the National Director explained the organisational structure of Kolping India National Family Association and important roles played by village, cluster and district level Kolping Federations in ushering the growth and development of the communities particularly those from the marginalised sections of the society.

He also explained the different development projects implemented by Kolping India in collaboration with the 33 Diocesan Kolping and the key role played by the respective DLKFs in strengthening Kolping Family associations in their respective Diocesan Kolping area on behalf of Kolping India.



**Election for Tamil Nadu Region**



**Members elected from Andhra Pradesh  
Telangana – Karnataka Region**



**Members elected from Tamil Nadu Region**



**Members elected from Kerala Region**

Name	Representing DLKF
Fr. Anthony	Hyderabad
Fr. Emmanuel	Eluru
Ms. Arokia Mary	Bangalore
Mr. Abraham Reddy	Warangal
Ms. Vanaja Kadiyala	Eluru
Fr. David	Salem
Mr. Maria Francis	Dindigul
Ms. Geetha	Kuzhithurai
Ms. Jacqueline	Ooty
Mr. Antony Joseph	Cochin
Ms. Maria Gorethi	Kannur

The participants expressed their contentment of witnessing positive changes in the lives of people around and shared the challenges they had encountered in the journey towards building Kolping family identity. Followed by the Orientation program, election at Region Levels for filling the vacancies in the National Board of Kolping India was conducted. The DLKF members participated enthusiastically in ballot voting to elect their representatives to the National Board. The following members were elected to Kolping India National Board:

The National Director thanked all those participated in the Election and wished the elected members for a productive tenure in the Kolping India National Board.

## ELECTION FOR KOLPING INDIA NATIONAL DIRECTOR AND NATIONAL PRESIDENT



Kolping India National Board Meeting



Introduction of Kolping India National Board Members

Followed by the elections at the State Level, the Election to Kolping India National Board was culminated with the election for the National Director and National President on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024 at Joe Beach Chennai. Dr. Maria Soosai was unanimously re-elected for second term of office as National Director for another 5 years. Mr. Abraham Reddy from Warangal Kolping was elected unopposed as the National President. The election to the National Director and National President was conducted by Msg. Vincent D Cruz, Former National Board

Member and Director of Punalur Kolping in the presence of Fr. Gabriel, the Diocesan Director of Madurai Kolping and Fr. Jaipal, the Diocesan Kolping Director of Srikakulam as election observers.

Kolping India National Family Association joins together to congratulate the Newly elected National Board Members and particularly Dr. Maria Soosai, the re-elected National Director and Mr. Abraham Reddy, the newly elected National President and wish them all the success in their endeavours.

## KOLPING INDIA NATIONAL LEVEL TRAINING CUM COORDINATION MEETING



The Annual project review and coordination meeting of Kolping India Collaborating Partners was held on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024 at Joe Beach Resort, Mahabalipuram near Chennai. Dr. Maria Soosai, the National Director welcomed the participants from 33 Kolping Regions and expressed gratitude for their continuous support and cooperation in implementing Kolping India projects in their respective dioceses. As scheduled, Kolping India invited presentations from Collaborating Partner Organisations highlighting key achievements and analysis of the activities undertaken on behalf of Kolping India.

### Project Review Presentations

After the inaugural session, 10 representatives from collaborating partner organizations who volunteered to present were invited to present a detailed review of their projects. Each presentation covered:

- Membership data – including comparative growth, and trend
- Key achievements regarding Kolping India Projects, narrated in quantitative and qualitative terms
- Challenges faced solutions adopted.

The presentations were followed by an interactive Question and Answer session, where participants engaged in meaningful discussions and shared their feedback.

A slogan contest was organised for the Collaborating Partner Organisations to frame a slogan succinctly expressing the below quote of Blessed Adolph Kolping.

*“We can do much, if only we really want to; we can do great things, when competent forces work together”. – Blessed Adolph Kolping*

The Coordinators and Directors of Collaborating Partner Organisations participated enthusiastically in the competition. Every contestant presented her/his slogan that depicted indoctrination of the philosophy of Adolph Kolping and one family concept.



## ECOLOGY AND LIVELIHOOD – CENTRAL THEME OF BMZ FUNDED PROJECT



**Kolping Family Meeting in progress**

Stimulated by the words of Adolph Kolping, "What is too difficult for individuals and what they often fail to achieve becomes feasible without much effort when joined forces supporting and strengthening each other pursue their goals." Kolping India had attempted to promote Kolping family associations through self-help strategy with the support of 33 Diocesan Kolping associations in India. The project was funded by BMZ through Kolping International,

Germany. So far, over 42,100 people predominantly women from marginalised communities were facilitated to form 3350 Kolping family associations at village level. These associations or groups functions as micro level structures and they were further federated into Cluster, District/Diocesan and National Levels.

Effective management of social structures at various levels and particularly the District Level Federations were strengthened by developing their leadership skills through life-skills and group management trainings. Facilitated evolution of new leadership at all levels from the grassroot level to the national level governing body.



**Skill training on Value Added Product**

The project implemented in 298 villages in 33 Kolping areas focused on empowering communities with knowledge, information and skills to conserve ecology through series of activities. These training sessions also focused on specific themes like communitybased-water resource management, social forestry, solid waste management, organic cultivation etc. In addition, 42 workshops on renewable energy usage were conducted to promote

eco-friendly alternatives among households. Networking and collaboration to facilitate dialogue and collective action among local groups, NGOs, and government agencies was given priority. These initiatives not only cultivated a sense of responsibility towards conserving environment but also dealt the topic of sustainable livelihood of the marginalized communities involved.

## SPECIAL PROJECT SUPPORT

Kolping India from time to time initiates special projects to support the most marginalised community groups like Tribals, Farmers and Fishers to overcome systemic barriers and achieve sustainable livelihoods. These projects, often provide critical resources to the deserving families to improve their livelihood through skill training, modern equipment, and market access, empowering communities to break the cycle of poverty.



Kolping Members fishing in River Cauvery using the new coracles and nets distributed

### Livelihood Enhancement

Twenty-eight Kolping members were supported with improvised tools and equipment to engage in fishing activities. Kolping India through its Collaborating partner organisation had identified deserving Kolping members, who had been traditionally engaged in fishing activity as their primary livelihood. The use of obsolete tools and equipment by these fisher families resulted in dwindling income from the occupation. After assessing their needs, the identified Kolping members were supported to purchase improvised fish nets, boats and other accessories.

The new coracles and fishing nets distributed to 5 members from the tribal community at Billigundu village at Dharmapuri Region helped them to sustain their income. The members were involved in fishing in river Cauvery and operated Coracle rides for tourists in Hogenakkal. The use of new and improved coracles and nets had increased the fish catch and attracted tourists as the new coracles offered a sense of better safety when riding in river Cauvery. On an average, a family earned Rs.350/- per day and the income is anticipated to be doubled during tourist season.

Four fishermen from Alleppey Kolping region were excited to have new boats designed and developed creatively using Fibre Reinforced Plastic. The four members were earlier using thermocol boats which was prone to damage.

The Fibre reinforcement provided added strength and longevity to the boat giving an option for fishermen to fit outboard engines, when necessary. The boats were handed over to the fishermen at a function organised at Alleppey in the presence of P.P Chitharanjan, Minister of Legislative Assembly,

Alappuzha; Fr. Samson Anjiliparambil, Director ADC & SWS; Rev. Dr. Yesudas Kattungalathayil, Rector, Arthunkal Basilica; Jackson Pollayil, President of Fisherman Federation; Rajesh Sebastian, Board member; Sabu V Thomas, National President of Kolping India.



## MILCH ANIMAL PROJECT



**Members from Tribal Community with their Cattle at Srikakulam**

40 families from indigenous and farming communities were supported to engage in cattle rearing in 2024. Each family purchased two goats, which provide multiple benefits due to their low maintenance requirements and rapid breeding cycles. The frequent kidding cycles enable herd multiplication thus increasing income potential for the families. Selling goats for meat generates significant revenue. Additionally, the goats produce a substantial amount of milk, which not only nourishes the families but also serves as an extra income source. This dual income stream from meat sales and milk production ensures financial stability for the families.

## KOLPING PRODUCTS OUTLETS



**Kolping Market Outlet at Kottar**



**Kolping Market Outlet at Dindigul**



**Kolping Market Outlet at Kumbakonam**



Kolping India supported to establish market outlets in 5 Kolping areas at Kumbakonam Kolping, Kottar Kolping, Sultanpet Kolping, Alleppey Kolping and Dindigul Kolping. These outlets were aimed at creating a channel for marketing value-added products produced by small, home-based Kolping entrepreneurs. The established outlets support the entrepreneurs to reach a wider customer base by providing branding, packaging, competitive pricing and sales services, the resources and skills which the small entrepreneurs often found to be lacking. The outlets play a vital role in positioning the products to customers in a more appealing manner, allowing the entrepreneurs to focus on producing quality products to the demands of the market.

### **SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC WELLBEING PROJECT SUPPORT**



**Lalitha making basket as part of her Livelihood - Marthandam**

1606 Kolping members were supported financially to improve their living conditions through various SocioEconomic Wellbeing Projects in 2024. Kolping India extended partial financial support to Kolping members and assisted them to maximize the family income for improving their quality of life.

### **LIVELIHOOD PROMOTION**



**Anjelin managing a tailoring shop at Sultanpet**

The project promoted micro level enterprises among the Kolping family groups for economic development. The project was designed to motivate and educate the deserving members from the marginalized community groups with self-employable skills and preparing them to engage in economic development spheres. The

entrepreneurship development training coupled with financial support from Kolping India, and related institutions had enabled individual members to involve in Individual Income Generation Activities (IIGAs) or a small group of members to take up Collective Income Generation Activities (CIGAs). These economic ventures were either new economic activities or diversification of the existing trade. A total of 277 Kolping members had accessed Kolping India IIGP and CIGP Project Funds in 2024.

## MILCH ANIMAL PROJECT



Lavanya rear Goats at her backyard – Warangal

This project supported Kolping women members to purchase and rear milch animals to improve their family income. For women members who do not have a sustainable income source due to their lack of education or vocational skill, cattle rearing was found suitable livelihood to earn income as cattle rearing involved low risk and most preferred economic activity in rural areas. Kolping India had supported 485 Kolping members to engage in livestock rearing.

## HOUSEHOLD TOILET



Panimalar – Dindugal



Josephine Mary – Trichy

Lack of proper sanitation has been a serious concern in India. The project aimed at ending the practice of open defecation among Kolping members by educating and motivating them to construct household toilet. The families who had been practicing open defecation were made aware of the ill effect of open defecation and the benefits of household toilets. 575 Kolping members were supported to construct Toilet and the families had been using it hygienically.

## VOCATIONAL TRAINING



Ancy - Sulthanpet

Promoting vocational skills have been one of the effective tools to prepare the younger generation to be fit into the job market. The first-generation learners, who come out of formal school system were neither aware of various possible courses that could offer them a job, nor they possessed adequate resource to pursue job-oriented courses.

Consequently, they ended up joining with unskilled labour population in informal sector, earning far below their potential. The possession of job skills placed the person better employed in the formal sector or self-employed in the informal sector. Kolping India, therefore, promoted Vocational Training courses among the children of Kolping Family Associations to prepare them suitable to the job market. 101 youths were supported to pursue job-oriented courses in 2024.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING



Mariya Bebin Ruby

Housing is a symbol of Family identity, and it is one of the indicators of 'Quality of Life'. Kolping India had introduced the Housing Support Project (HSP) in 1993 and has been supporting Kolping members to construct affordable houses, as large number of Kolping members were from poor strata and were deprived of a decent place to live. 168 families were partially supported to have a decent dwelling in 2024 across India.

## STORIES FROM THE FIELD

### Sathiyavani turned her life from a Salesgirl to a Shop Owner



Sathiyavani is from Varnatheertham village in Dharmapuri district. She is 28 years old and the life of her had shown signs of progress after she joined the Kolping Family Association, Gangai Nathi Kolping SHG' in 2020. As per her words, 'the desire of augmenting the well-being of family enthused her to join the Kolping Family'.

The husband of Sathiyavani, who worked as an unskilled daily labourer brought home a meagre income which was insufficient to cater the needs of the family. She, therefore, had to take up a job in the local fancy store as a salesgirl. She could not continue the job in the fancy store as the child of 2 years old required her attention and care. So, she resigned the job with the intention of starting a small fancy store.

The small saving scheme in Kolping association was the initial impetus to start a shop of her own. She approached the group for a loan of Rs.40,000/-from the group saving scheme. With the initial investment of Rs.6,500/- from her personal saving and Rs.40,000/- as a loan from the group saving and Rs.10,000/- from Kolping India Individual Income Generation Revolving fund, she opened a shop near the town bus stand.

The shop is now 1 years old and she manage the fancy store independently which fetches her an income that varies between Rs.500 to Rs.800 per day. She is able to earn a profit of Rs.9,000/- per month, besides paying monthly rent and loan repayments. The shop is now jointly managed by her and her husband. The shop has remained as a sustainable income source for the family.

**"The savings and lending system in our Kolping group is the lifeline for many of us in the group that we can rely on to get money for our urgent and development needs. With the financial support, I have turned my dream of owning a fancy store into reality. It has not only helped me earn a steady income but also allows me to balance my family responsibilities". – Sathiyavani**

## STARLIN SUBILA – A BUDDING ENTREPRENEUR



Sathiyavani is from Varnatheertham village in Dharmapuri district. She is 28 years old and the life of her had shown signs of progress after she joined the Kolping Family Association, Gangai Nathi Kolping SHG' in 2020. As per her words, 'the desire of augmenting the well-being of family enthused her to join the Kolping Family'. family income was unstable as the employment of Pauldhas had been seasonal and irregular. Subila experienced hardship to nurture the family with adequate nutrition and quality education to the children. Subila became part of St.Fathima Annai Kolping Family since its inception in 2016.

As the group saving was made mandatory, she contributed Rs. 200/- per month to the group saving scheme. Realizing the inadequacy of the income to nurture the family, she decided to master skill in tailoring by joining in a professional tailoring institute. On completion of training course, she availed Rs.10,000 as loan from Kolping India Individual Income Generation Project revolving Fund with which she bought a sewing pedal machine. She started stitching dresses for the fellow Kolping Family members which earned her a reasonable income for the family. The production of quality work, modern designs, and precise fittings earned her a reputation in the village.

She earned good number of customers from the neighbourhood through the referral of Kolping Family members. As she became popular tailor in the locality, the demand for her services grew. Appropriating the market demand, she took a second loan of Rs.50,000/- from the revolving fund and Rs.10,000 from the group savings to purchase four sewing machines of which one is fitted with electric motor. Consequently, she increased the production capacity and started offering tailoring training to women in the neighbourhood. She charged a modest fee for a six-month course, training 4 to 5 students in two batches a day. Additionally, the students were employed as apprentices as part of tailoring training to stitch clothes whenever she receives bulk orders. Presently, she earns an average of Rs.15,000 per month as income for her family. She has repaid her second loan too. This additional income from the tailoring unit helps Starlin Subila to provide better education for her daughters.

**"The financial assistance helped me stand on my own feet. I learned tailoring, started my own business, and now earn enough to take care of my family. I am also teaching other women so they can earn too." - Starlin Subila**

## THRIVING TOGETHER - WEAVING A SUCCESS STORY



Inspired by the words of Blessed Adolph Kolping, “What is too difficult for individuals becomes feasible when joined forces supporting each other”, five women members from the Vinnarasi Kolping Family in Sultanpet turned their ailing tailoring activity into a successful collective enterprise. Vency, Rosalin Jennifer, Fathima Rosali, Vinciya, and Lidiya completed tailoring course in 2022 and began stitching clothes using manual pedal sewing machines at their respective homes.

They were able to generate some income by stitching clothes for their neighbouring customers. Household responsibilities often interrupted their work, reducing productivity. They wanted to pursue tailoring as a fulltime self-employment activity, but they feared of taking up tailoring individually as the demand was too little. Stimulated by Entrepreneurship Training Program by Kolping India, the five members realized that they should start the venture collectively to pool together their expertise.

With a well-prepared proposal, they secured Rs.2,00,000 from Kolping India Collective Income Generation Project, which helped to realise their business plan. They rented a shop in a central location, upgraded their sewing machines and inaugurated Vinnarasi Kolping Dressmakers shop four months ago. The collective effort and upgrade facility attracted bulk orders from institutions and other customers. The shop offered a wide range of services like stitching clothe and designing work in ladies wears which fetch them substantial income. Each member now earns around Rs.4,500 per month, increasing their individual earnings.

Working together has developed a culture of shared responsibility and boosted their confidence, leadership, and decision-making skills. The story of Vinnarasi Kolping Dressmakers proves that collaboration overcomes individual limitations. What they couldn't achieve alone, they accomplished together, building a sustainable business, uplifting their families, and inspiring others in the Kolping community.

## ANJALAI MADE HER WAY FROM HARDSHIP TO HOPE



Anjalai aged 37 years is a single mother of two girl children. She resides in Orgadam village along with her daughters - Kanika (20 years old) and Rajeswari (18 years old). The family belongs to the Irular Community - a scheduled tribe that has faced historical oppression from the other sections of society. Traditionally, the main occupation of the Irular community was snake and rat catching. They also work as labourers in the fields of the landlords or in the rice mills.

The lack of education coupled with ban on trading snake for its skin severely affected the community livelihood. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS), a government scheme for Poverty reduction somehow provides these women, jobs for over 100 days a year. Amidst of these hardships, Anjalai prioritized her children's education.

She educated both her daughters in a local Government school. The elder daughter, Kanika, was good in her studies. Despite the adversities they faced, Anjalai remained committed in providing educational opportunities for her children. While Kanika was pursuing her studies seriously, Rajeswari, the younger daughter dropped out in 10 th class and had to shoulder responsibilities at home due to Anjalai's ill health, taking charge of tasks such as cooking, washing utensils, and laundering clothes. Under these circumstances, the activities of Kolping were introduced in the village in 2017, when Kolping India further narrowed down its development intervention on the most marginalised communities.

Anjalai and few other women from the Irular community got impressed upon the functioning of Kolping Family Association and formed Mariamman Kolping Family in 2017. The formation of Kolping Family Association gave space for a purposeful discussion for the members to share concerns and aspirations and find solutions for their problems in a mutually supportive environment.

The regular meetings of Kolping Family Association fostered a culture of solidarity and support among its members. Economically, the group started lending and borrowing money within the group. Additionally, the members also accessed Kolping India's Individual Income Generation Program (IIGP) funds to start small economic activities. Anjalai seized many opportunities to develop her family financial conditions by utilizing Kolping India IIGP fund to invest in artificial jewellery rental business. From the financial support she received, she bought artificial jewellery sets, which she rented out to customers. With continued support from Kolping India, she increased her income sources by investing in goat and poultry.

The rearing of goats and chickens also provide the needed nutrition to the family. The income from cattle, rental of artificial jewellery supplements the family income which is now taken care by her younger daughter. The family looks forward to bright future and is hopeful that Anjalai's elder daughter will get a secured job as a teacher to support the family. The family is now assured of a stable income. The family acknowledge the contribution of Kolping India in their development and thanked Kolping whole heartedly for making the change possible. Anjalai, a mother of two adolescent daughters, who shoulders the family responsibility single handedly said that "Kolping gave the courage to face the challenges in life.

**"Kolping not only provided economic opportunities but instilled in us a sense of solidarity and resilience. Our heartfelt gratitude to Kolping India for facilitating positive changes in our lives." - Anjalai**

#### **BUILDING DREAMS BRICK BY BRICK: MARY PHILOMINA'S JOURNEY TO A DIGNIFIED LIFE**



In the village of Pinkulam down South of Tamil Nadu in Kanyakumari district, lives Mary Philomina, a Kolping member whose determination had helped her and her family to own a decent house. As a daily wage worker, Mary earned her livelihood by offering home care to the sick and elderly in her neighbourhood. She was married to Nelson, coconut tree climber by occupation. She had two sons who, after completing their 12<sup>th</sup> grade education, work as helpers for a mason. Despite the hard work, the earning from the four members was not sufficient to have a decent living. They were living in a substandard old house, built of mud clay plastered walls covered with tin roof. The life under tin roofed house was challenging for the family particularly during hot summer and rainy seasons.

The urge for a better life although lingering in Mary's mind for years, she was clueless of where to start and whom to approach. Observing the active spiritual and social engagement of Kolping members in the parish, she joined St. Alphonsa Kolping Family, which was functioning in her village from 2015. Mary learnt life skills through various trainings and started to aspire for better life with the encouragement of Kolping Family members. Motivated by the savings and micro credit activities in Kolping family associations, she availed fund support from Kolping India under Housing Support project.

She decided to construct a new house on a small piece of land owned by her, located close to their old mud-walled house. She constructed the new house with the support of Kolping India which sponsored Rs.50,000/- and the credit of Rs.75,000/- taken from the Kolping Family association. The old wooden materials which was available in the market was purchased to minimize the total construction cost of the house. The whole family was involved in the construction, helping the masons in the process of construction. It took 6 months to complete the house. As a result, Mary now owns a strong, concrete-roofed house, measuring 460 square feet which includes two rooms, a kitchen, and a toilet. This new house now provides them a safe and comfortable shelter, protecting them during monsoons and summers alike.

### **A SIMPLE TOILET GIVES ANCY AND HER DAUGHTERS THE MUCH NEEDED PRIVACY, SAFETY, COMFORT, CLEANLINESS, AND DIGNITY**



Ancy, a 51-year-old housewife from Aranmula in Kozhenchery village, leads a modest life with her husband, Aji Wilson. The couple has two children, Reena 24 years old, who is pursuing a Diploma in Computer Science, and Roshin, 22 years old, who is undergoing skill training at an Industrial Training Institute (ITI). Aji works as an agricultural labourer, but due to its seasonal nature, he often struggles to find work. She has taken up employment under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), a government scheme that provides employment for 100 days for a family. The family faced severe financial hardships due to meagre earning. The life of Ancy took a positive turn when she joined the St. Sebastian's Kolping Family in 2018.

She attended various training sessions that helped her gain knowledge, life skills, and confidence. The support from Kolping Family encouraged her to explore ways to improve the living conditions of the family. One of the major challenges Ancy and her daughters faced was the lack of a household toilet. The family had to use the household toilet of one her relatives. Ancy desired to build a toilet for her family, but given their financial situation, her husband was not in favour of the idea.

The aspiration of Ancy became a reality when she learned about Kolping India's Sanitation Assistance Project. Recognizing the importance of proper sanitation for dignity and hygiene, she convinced her husband and went ahead planning the budget. The total cost of constructing the toilet, including labour and materials, amounted to Rs. 35,000. Kolping India contributed Rs. 15,000, while Ancy availed Rs. 20,000 from group saving scheme. The toilet was constructed and put in use for the family.

### SECURING SON'S FUTURE

Mary Gracy is an active member of the Starly Kolping Family in Palakkad district in Kerala. Mary and her husband Martin are wage labourers who toils in the agricultural fields of various landowners who hire them for agricultural works. Their work is physically demanding, and their income was barely sufficient, yet they strive each day to meet the basic needs of the family.



Their elder son, **Infant Xavier** is a bright and ambitious young boy with a strong desire to change the course of his family's future. After securing good marks in his 12<sup>th</sup> standard board examinations, he gained admission into the Diploma in Electrical and Electronics Engineering (DEEE) program at JCT Polytechnic College in Coimbatore. Though excited about this opportunity, the family faced a major hurdle — as a private institution, the college did not provide access to government scholarships, leaving the burden of the fees solely on the shoulders of Mary Gracy and Martin. Undeterred by their limited means, Mary Gracy and her husband worked tirelessly to fund Xavier's education for the first two years of the course. Their commitment was not just to his studies, but to the hope that one day he would lift their family out of poverty.

However, just as Xavier was entering the critical final year of his diploma, Martin fell sick and was unable to work for over three months. The family was suddenly left without his income and was further strained by the costs of his medical treatment. During this period, Mary Gracy alone shouldered the responsibility of running the household, supporting her sons, and covering medical expenses. Adding to the difficulty, the final year tuition fees were higher than the previous years, and the burden became too much for her to manage. Faced with this financial crisis, Mary Gracy turned to Kolping India for support.

Moved by her determination and the family's plight, Kolping India extended financial assistance to cover a significant portion of the third-year fees. The college administration also showed understanding by allowing the fees to be paid in two instalments. This timely support lifted a major part of the burden from Mary Gracy's shoulders and ensured that Infant Xavier could continue his education without interruption.

Today, Mary Gracy is filled with gratitude and renewed hope. With just one year left in his course, Xavier is well on his way to completing his diploma and stepping into a career that will not only secure his own future but also bring relief to his family. For Mary Gracy, the support from Kolping India was more than just financial aid but it was a lifeline that helped to keep the dream of her son alive.

#### **LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT TO NARIKURAVAR COMMUNITY**





Kolping India Intervention with the Narikuravar community at Pallavaram reached a new height as a result of the consistent performance of the two Kolping families formed a few years ago. The members demonstrated utmost commitment and dedication in managing the groups and were meticulous in handling group savings and project funds.

The two Kolping Families were accustomed with the routine function of regular savings, internal lending and repayment. Based on the exceptional performance of the two Kolping Families, Kolping India came forward to support selected members of the two Kolping Families with financial support for their Income Generation activities. The 20 members went through an input session on enterprises development organised at Kolping India National Office on 18<sup>th</sup>

December 2024. Concluding the input session, Dr. Maria Soosai, the National Director distributed financial support to the 20 members who had presented their business plans. The members were assisted by Kolping India National Office staff to procure the needed raw materials at the whole sale market.