

Report

Second Annual Conference on Interdisciplinary Approaches to Social Responsibility - Evidences of Best Practices was organized by the Centre of Social Research, in association with the Deanery of Humanities and Social Sciences, Christ University, Bangalore.

The Second Annual conference on Interdisciplinary **Approaches to Social Responsibility - Evidences of Best Practices** was organized by the Centre of Social Research, in association with the Deanery of Humanities and Social Sciences, Christ University. This conference which took months in the course of its planning was organised on the 11 of Feb 2013.

The inauguration scheduled in the morning saw eminent academician and practitioners from Christ university and outside on the dais. The guests were welcomed by Dr Bino Thomas, Co-ordinator of Department of Social Work and of the conference. The speakers gave their perspectives about the concept of social responsibility. Principal among them was the Dean Prof Mallika Krishnaswami. The Registrar of the University, Dr Anil Pinto spoke eloquently about the meaning of interdisciplinarity. The chief guest of the day, Prof Shekhar, internationally renowned specialist in Disaster Management, from NIMHANS, Bangalore, spoke about the issue of displacement and the support that IFCU (International Federation of Catholic Universities) gives to vital research initiatives across the globe. The key note address was made by Dr Julie Clarke, Head, Department of Social Work, Griffith University, Australia. She very effortlessly brought out the serious issues involved within the ambit of social responsibility.

The inaugural session was followed by a documentary on displacement. The documentary was titled "Bagalkot Saga", highlighting the plight of the people displaced due to the construction of the dam at Alamatti. This documentary was produced and developed by the Centre for Concept Design, Christ University. The content was developed by a research team consisting of Fr Arun Antony, Prof Johnny Joseph and Dr. Hemalatha of Christ University.

The Conference was divided into ten concurrent sessions, each of which focussed on the following themes

- Corporate social responsibility
- Educational institutions and responsibility
- Organisational issues
- Service learning
- Health issues
- Issues of people in difficult circumstances
- Responsible business
- Needs of children
- Issues of families and couples relationships

Sessions #1

Social responsibility has been traditionally receiving attention from the Corporate. Recent legal amendments have added fillip to these initiatives. These were presented during this session. The case studies and practices of several industries were presented.

This also included case studies of NGOs involved in social responsibility work of the corporate. The case studies included those from BHEL, Sander technologies, TISCO, Nestle, Coco Cola and a case study from the retail industry of Korea. The session was chaired by Dr. K. Hemalatha, Dept. of Social Work, Christ University.

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Session#2

This session looked at the issues that organisations face and their response through the mechanisms of CSR. The concept of social responsibility is today visualised as not merely exercises outside the corporate. They include the issues within the organisations especially those of the employees. These were looked at by a few presenters. These looked at the problem of absenteeism and its management in a construction company. The integration of disabled employees and gender discrimination and its impact on the careers of women were subjects of two presentations. Contract labours that are the focus of all employee relations issues in India today was focused on in a paper which looked at their well being. The management of occupation stress, social security measures available to garment workers were discussed as also the issue of job satisfaction in the educational sector. The management of “burnt out individuals” by the corporates was also looked at. This session was chaired by Prof Om Prakash, Dept. of Sociology, Christ University.

Session#3

Going with the growing importance of social responsibility, educational institutions have begun showing initiatives as part of academic life of students. Many papers were presented related to this issue. The student’s perception of social responsibility is probably the backbone of any initiative. This was presented initially. How financing education becomes a pivotal discussion was evident with a presentation on this aspect. The role scholarships as part of being responsible were looked at. Three presentations were made about the role of the university in making students responsible. Many perspectives were placed before the audience.

Session #4

The concept of service learning is becoming vital in colleges as it helps them to look at issues of nation building and create greater civic concern in their students. This session on service learning was chaired by Dr Padma Kumari, Dept of Psychology, Christ University. Students who were part of the responsibility campaigns of Christ University presented papers. They looked at the issues of the use of plastics, empowerment of women in slums, use of media, public health, the use of power of smile in stress management in their presentations.

Session #5

Ten papers were presented during this session on health issues which was chaired by Prof Tony Sam George, Dept of Psychology, Christ University. The main areas included programs dealing with health issues (HIV/AIDS) which focused on two programs HSRA and AVAHA for providing services to the HIV affected, social hazards of coal miners in Khammam district, Andhra Pradesh focusing on the social and occupational health hazards of underground coal miners. Role of media in promoting contraceptives : an analysis of the India ‘s family planning programs which focused on understanding the role of print and mass media for the promotion of contraceptive pills and the understand the Indian government promotion strategies through ads .Causes of Maternal mortality and sources of financing pre-natal and post natal medical intervention expenditure in Andhra Pradesh which mainly focused on the causes of Maternal mortality rates and source of finance for pre-natal and post natal medical expenditures. Effectiveness of life skills training among institutionalized adolescents which mainly focused on life skills training for adolescent girls for making better choices in Life situations. Farmer’s suicide with the main focus of understanding trends of farmer’s suicide socio – economic factors contributing to farmer suicide. The effectiveness of teachers training on learning disability identification was also an important research contribution.

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Session #6 Business and responsibility

Five papers were presented during this session which was chaired by Prof Xavier. A paper on minimum wage implementation looked at this issue and the analysis showed the comparative results of the unionised domestic workers and non unionised domestic workers. The results showed the impact of variables on education and awareness. Another study looked at the ethical issues associated with advertisement industry and the role that ethics play in upholding societal values. This becomes an emerging issue within the domain of social responsibility. Another paper looked at the issue of inland fishing and the problems faced by the fishermen. Issues such as sanitation, health and security were looked at. The fisher men have been pushed to the brink of survival. The next paper looked at poverty reduction and the role of institutions. The last paper looked at the state of Indian agriculture.

Session #7

This session looked at the needs of children. The session was chaired by Prof Ankur Madan of the Department of Psychology, Christ University. Children deserve our special attention. As the future citizen no social responsibility discussion can be complete without them. The papers presented during this session were related to attachment styles of young people and their academic motivation. Closely related was a paper on body image of young people. Moving on to younger children, one paper looked at quality time spent and the perception of the two stakeholders, parent and their children. Two very important papers looked at children with special needs, the deaf children. These children need our special attention and the issues were discussed in depth. The discussions focused on the responsibility of the larger section of the society towards the children in need of care and protection.

Session #8 and 9

People under special circumstances were held in two sessions chaired by two professors of the Sociology Department-Prof. Prita Dasupta and Prof. Suparna Kar. The papers presented included case studies from Maldives and Cambodia. These looked at the responsibility issues in the context of suicide and also in relation to gang violence. Issues related to the sick were discussed like factors impacting the survivors of cancer, anxiety disorders, issues of well being were looked at and the importance it has on the lives of the aged. Another paper looked at the problems of the evictees of a slum. The problem of displacement was focussed upon. Some of the papers looked at musicians as a special group of people and the circumstances that surround their lives which make their lives difficult.

Session #10

This session looked at issues in couple and family relations. It was chaired by Prof Baiju Gopal of the Department of Psychology, Christ University. Papers presented covered topics like gender differences in distress and coping after dissolution of a romantic relationship, marital satisfaction in interfaith marriages in India, exploring the emotional experience of surrogate mothers: from signing the contract to post delivery, Attachment styles and relationship in cohabitating partners, study on relationship between perceived parental style, psychological birth order and personality traits in young adults, psychological health of caregivers, effects on the care giving relationship and quality of care, family environment and subjective well being among alcoholics during abstinence and commitment and dependency in romantic relationship.

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The conference concluded with a Valedictory and distribution of certificates. The participants expressed their need to have this conference every year as it encouraged their academic and research skills.