

Migrant Voice

05 March 2025



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SUCCESSFUL ABHA CARD REGISTRATION CAMPAIGN FOR MIGRANT WORKERS IN CHENNAI

FEBRUARY 19 – 20, 2025:

The Abha Card Registration Campaign, organized by Don Bosco Migrant Services with the support of the Unorganized Labour Workers Federation and the Don Bosco Brothers at Kavarapettai, was successfully held on February 19th and 20th, 2025. The campaign aimed to support migrant construction workers by providing them with essential benefits, including the Abha Card, a crucial initiative for empowering unorganized laborers in India.

CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of the campaign was to register migrant workers for the Abha Card, which would grant them access to a variety of welfare services. This initiative was part of a larger effort to promote the welfare of migrant workers, ensuring that they receive benefits and services like health insurance, social security, and other governmental supports. The significance of education in shaping the future of the children and the community. They collectively stressed the importance of consistent school attendance, the long-term benefits of education, and the role parents play in encouraging their children's academic journey.

The awareness session successfully addressed the challeng-

es of school dropout among tribal children and inspired both parents and students to take education seriously. With the cooperation of various departments and community leaders, the event served as a pivotal moment in promoting educational engagement within the tribal community. The ongoing support from stakeholders, including the tuition teachers and local authorities, will ensure the sustainable impact of the initiative. Further follow-up sessions are planned to continue this important dialogue and prevent future dropouts.

CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

CAMPAIGN LOCATIONS

- MANDAVALI
- ADYAR
- MYLAPORE
- RK ROAD ARIYA



During the two-day campaign, a team of volunteers, including staff members from Don Bosco Migrant Services and the Unorganized Labour Workers Federation, worked to facilitate the registration process. They provided assistance in completing necessary paperwork, educating workers about the benefits of the Abha Card, and ensuring that all required documents were submitted.

Additionally, the team conducted awareness sessions to explain the significance of the Abha Card and other welfare measures available to the workers.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Total Participants:** 343 migrant construction laborers successfully registered for the Abha Card.
- **Impact on the Workforce:** The registration provides these workers with access to vital welfare services, including health-

care and social security, contributing to their well-being and improving their quality of life.

- **Community Engagement:** The campaign saw active participation from the local community, including the migrant workers themselves, who expressed gratitude for the services provided.

Support and Collaboration

The campaign was made possible through the collaboration between Don Bosco Migrant Services, the Unorganized Labour Workers Federation, and the Don Bosco Brothers at Kavarapettai. The support from these organizations enabled the campaign to reach a large number of migrant workers and provide them with tangible benefits.

CONCLUSION

The Abha Card Registration Campaign was a resounding success, reflecting the power of collaboration and community engagement. By providing 343 migrant construction laborers with

the benefits of the Abha Card, the event has made a significant contribution toward the welfare of migrant workers in Chennai. This campaign not only addressed immediate needs but also laid the foundation for long-term support for migrant workers in the region.

Moving forward, similar initiatives are essential to continue empowering migrant workers and ensuring that they are not left behind in the nation's development process.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The success of this event would not have been possible without the unwavering support of the Don Bosco Migrant Services team, the Unorganized Labour Workers Federation, and the Don Bosco Brothers. Special thanks to the volunteers and community members who actively participated in making this campaign a success.



REPORT ON THE DEPRESSION AWARENESS PROGRAM FOR MIGRANT CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

On February 6th, 2025, Don Bosco Migrant Services, in collaboration with Dr. Geeta Raj Morgan and her team from Kilpauk Hospital, organized a program aimed at raising awareness about depression among migrant construction workers. This event was an important initiative in addressing mental health issues within a vulnerable segment of the workforce. The program was designed to educate the workers on recognizing symptoms of depression, seeking help, and coping with mental health challenges in their daily lives.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

The primary objectives of the event were:

- To raise awareness about depression and mental health issues.
- To educate migrant construction workers on recognizing the signs and symptoms of depression.

- To provide information on available support systems and resources for mental health.

- To reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues, particularly in the migrant worker community.
- To empower workers to take proactive steps in improving their mental well-being.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The program specifically targeted migrant construction workers, a group that often faces significant challenges, including long working hours, physical strain, isolation from family, and cultural adaptation. These factors can contribute to mental health issues such as depression, which

may go unrecognized or untreated due to a lack of awareness and available resources.

PROGRAM CONTENT AND ACTIVITIES

The event featured a comprehensive series of presentations, discussions, and interactive activities aimed at increasing understanding of depression and its effects. The activities included:

- Expert Talk on Depression: Dr. Geeta Raj Morgan and her team provided an insightful presentation on the causes, symptoms, and treatment of depression. The presentation focused on how depression can manifest in various ways, including physical, emo-

tional, and behavioral symptoms.

- **Interactive Q&A Session:** Following the expert talk, a Q&A session was held where workers had the opportunity to ask questions and share their concerns related to mental health. This allowed the workers to gain clarity on their own experiences and receive personalized advice.
- **Stress Management Techniques:** Dr. Morgan's team also conducted a brief workshop on stress management techniques, including mindfulness exercises, deep breathing, and relaxation techniques that workers could incorporate into their daily routines.
- **Resource Distribution:** Information leaflets about depression, its symptoms, and available mental health resources were distributed to all attendees. These leaflets also included contact information for local mental health professionals and counseling services.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

The event was attended by 70 migrant construction workers who actively participated in the discussions and activities. Despite initial reservations, the workers were engaged and showed a keen interest in learning about depression and mental health management. The interactive nature of the program helped break down barriers, allowing workers to share their experiences and seek advice.

CHALLENGES FACED

Despite the positive response, several challenges were encountered during the event:

- **Language Barriers:** Some

workers faced challenges in understanding the content due to language differences. However, translators were available to ensure that the message was effectively communicated.

- **Cultural Sensitivity:** As mental health awareness may still be a sensitive topic in certain cultures, the facilitators were mindful of cultural norms and ensured that the program was conducted in a non-judgmental and respectful manner.

FEEDBACK AND IMPACT

The feedback received from participants was overwhelmingly positive. Workers expressed appreciation for the opportunity to learn more about mental health and depression. Many participants indicated that they felt more comfortable discussing mental health issues and felt empowered to seek help if needed. Additionally, several workers mentioned that they would share the information with their colleagues to promote mental health awareness within their community.

CONCLUSION

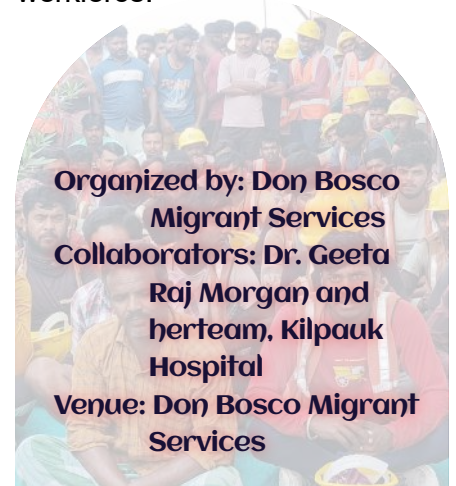
The Depression Awareness Program for Migrant Construction Workers was a successful initiative that addressed a critical gap in mental health awareness within this community. By providing valuable information, resources, and support, the program helped improve the workers' understanding of depression and its effects. The collaboration between Don Bosco Migrant Services and Kilpauk Hospital was instrumental in making the event impactful and meaningful.

Future programs of this nature are recommended to continue supporting migrant workers in improving their mental health and well-being, with a focus on overcoming stigma and increasing access to resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROGRAMS

Based on the outcomes of the event, the following recommendations are made for future programs:

- **Regular Mental Health Workshops:** Organize regular workshops to address ongoing mental health challenges and provide continued support to migrant workers.
 - **Expanded Outreach:** Extend the reach of such programs to include workers in other areas and industries where mental health issues may be prevalent.
 - **Follow-up Support:** Establish follow-up sessions to provide continued mental health support and check-ins with the workers.
- By continuing these initiatives, the mental well-being of migrant construction workers can be significantly improved, promoting a healthier and more productive workforce.



Organized by: Don Bosco Migrant Services

Collaborators: Dr. Geeta Raj Morgan and her team, Kilpauk Hospital

Venue: Don Bosco Migrant Services

REPORT ON MR. JOHN'S ACHIEVEMENT IN STATE-LEVEL PAPER PRESENTATION SYMPOSIUM



Mr. John, a displaced migrant child currently studying at Don Bosco Polytechnic College in the Basign Bridge area, recently achieved remarkable success by securing the 1st position in a state-level paper presentation symposium. The event was organized by P.S.B. Polytechnic College, located in Kelambakkam, and it brought together numerous students from various institutions to showcase their academic and research prowess. As a participant, Mr. John represented his institution with exceptional skill and dedication, standing out among a competitive group of participants.

The theme of the symposium, "Arrive and Achieve 2k25," focused on encouraging students to present innovative ideas and solutions that align with the aspirations of the future. Mr. John's presentation not only demonstrated his deep understanding of the subject matter but also his

ability to effectively communicate complex ideas. His work was lauded for its originality, thorough research, and practical application, which ultimately earned him the prestigious 1st place in the event.

Mr. John's achievement is a testament to his perseverance and hard work, overcoming the challenges associated with being a displaced migrant child. His

success in this state-level event reflects his commitment to academic excellence and his

bright future in the field of study he is pursuing. This victory not only enhances his personal academic journey but also brings recognition to Don Bosco Polytechnic College, highlighting the institution's ability to nurture talented individuals despite the socio-economic challenges they might face.



REPORT ON THE CCBI COMMISSION FOR MIGRANTS MEETING AT SHANTI SADAN PASTORAL CENTRE, GOA

FEBRUARY 20, 2025:

The Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI) Commission for Migrants held a significant meeting at the Shanti Sadan Pastoral Centre in Goa on February 20-21, 2025. This gathering brought together Diocesan Secretaries of the Commission for Migrants from the states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala to address critical issues affecting migrant communities, with a particular focus on the pastoral care of migrants.

The meeting was graced by the esteemed presence of Cardinal Ferrao, who delivered an impactful address to the attendees. Cardinal Ferrao's speech underscored the importance of the Church's role in supporting and advocating for the welfare of migrants, emphasizing the need for compassion, solidarity, and justice. The Cardinal encouraged the Diocesan Secretaries to enhance their efforts in providing spiritual guidance, social assistance, and legal support to migrant families and workers, who often face numerous challenges in their daily lives.

During the meeting, the Diocesan Secretaries shared insights into the migrant situation in their respective dioceses, discussing challenges such as inadequate living conditions, exploitation in the workplace, and difficulties in accessing healthcare and ed-



ucation. The discussions also highlighted the emotional and psychological struggles faced by migrants, particularly in the face of social isolation and discrimination.

In addition to addressing the pastoral concerns, the meeting included strategic sessions on how to strengthen the Commission's activities. The Diocesan Secretaries agreed on the importance of collaborative efforts between dioceses, local authorities, and various organizations to provide holistic support to migrant communities. The establishment of migrant-friendly services, such as legal aid and counseling, was identified as a priority for future initiatives.

Shanti Sadan Pastoral Centre, known for its peaceful environment conducive to reflection and dialogue, provided an ideal setting for these important discussions. The venue allowed participants to engage in thoughtful exchanges on practi-

cal approaches to migrant care, alongside spiritual nourishment through prayer and reflection sessions.

The gathering concluded with a renewed commitment to advocate for migrants' rights and to promote a culture of inclusion within the Church. The participants also agreed to continue their collaboration through regular meetings and shared resources to ensure the effective implementation of migrant support programs.

In conclusion, the CCBI Commission for Migrants meeting at Shanti Sadan Pastoral Centre proved to be an essential event in fostering greater awareness and action for the well-being of migrants in India. The insights gained and the collaborative efforts initiated will undoubtedly contribute to improving the lives of migrants and supporting the mission of the Church in addressing their needs with compassion and dignity.



THE INAUGURATION OF THE RELOCATED EVENING STUDY CENTER

FEBRUARY 22, 2025:

The newly relocated Evening Study Center was successfully inaugurated at its new location in the 19th Block, integrated within the premises of the 20th Block Association Union Welfare Office. The event was organized with the aim of providing a conducive learning environment for students residing in the vicinity. The relocation of the study center is expected to enhance the accessibility and availability of educational support for the community. The opening ceremony was graced by the Union Leader, Ganesh, who formally inaugurated the center and expressed his support for the initiative.

The Evening Study Center welcomed 19 students who en-

rolled for tuition services at the newly established venue. The center aims to provide quality educational assistance to students, ensuring that they have the necessary resources to succeed academically. Each of the attending students was presented with a stationery kit and chocolates as a token of appreciation for their participation. This gesture was made possible through the generous support of Don Bosco Migrant Services and the Brothers of Kavarapetai, who have consistently contributed to the welfare of the community.

The inauguration ceremony was a significant event in promoting education and community welfare. The union's active involvement and the support of various organizations highlight the importance of collaboration



in uplifting local communities. The Evening Study Center's relocation is expected to have a positive impact on students' academic performance, and the organizers are hopeful that it will continue to serve as a valuable resource for the local community in the years to come.

REPORT ON SAFETY AWARENESS PROGRAM MELA

FOSTERING A SAFE AND JOYFUL WORK ENVIRONMENT FOR LABORERS



Event Overview: On January 31, 2025, L&T Construction Private Limited, in collaboration with Don Bosco Migrant Services, organized a comprehensive Safety Awareness Program Mela for laborers at their worksite. The event, aimed at reinforcing safety protocols, promoting first aid knowledge, and fostering motivation, witnessed active participation from 362 workers. The theme of the program revolved around the concepts of "First Aid for Laborers," "Safety," "Joyful Life," and "Motivation." This event also marked the celebration of Safety Month, underscoring the significance of safety in every worker's life

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

The key objectives of the Safety Awareness Program Mela were:

- **Promote Safety Awareness:** To enhance the understanding of safety measures and their importance among the workers.
- **First Aid Training:** To provide the laborers with essential first aid skills and knowledge to handle emergencies effectively.
- **Motivation for Safe Practices:** To inspire workers to adopt safe practices in their daily work routines.
- **Celebrate Safety Month:** To commemorate the dedication to safety and remind everyone of the importance of working in a secure and healthy environment.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Comprehensive Safety Workshops:** Various workshops were organized to teach safety techniques, hazard identification, and the correct use of safety equipment.
- **First Aid Demonstrations:** Qualified trainers demonstrated basic first aid techniques, focusing on common injuries that may occur on construction sites. The workers were given hands-on practice in CPR, wound dressing, and emergency response pro-



cedures.

- **Interactive Safety Games and Competitions:** Fun and engaging activities were incorporated to make learning about safety both enjoyable and informative. The workers participated in safety quizzes, scenario-based exercises, and team challenges.
- **Motivational Talks and Sessions:** Motivational speakers and safety experts conducted sessions encouraging workers to not only focus on their professional growth but also on personal well-being. These sessions reinforced the importance of maintaining a safe and joyful life.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

A total of 362 workers attended the program, demonstrating significant interest and commitment towards improving their safety knowledge and practices. The workers, spanning various roles, actively participated in the event's sessions and activities, reflecting a strong eagerness to learn and apply safety protocols at their respective workstations.

COLLABORATION WITH DON BOSCO MIGRANT SERVICES:

The event was successfully hosted and facilitated by Don Bosco Migrant Services, who took on the responsibility of organizing and ensuring the smooth running of the program. Their efforts in creating an engaging and educational environment were integral to the event's success. The partnership between L&T Construction and Don Bosco Migrant Services was crucial in bringing this safety-focused initiative to life.

KEY TAKEAWAYS AND IMPACT:

- **Enhanced Safety Awareness:** Workers gained a deeper understanding of safety practices, which will contribute to reducing accidents and injuries on-site.
- **Empowered Workforce:** The first aid training equipped workers with critical life-saving skills, ensuring they can handle potential medical emergencies until professional help arrives.
- **Motivated Workforce:** The motivational sessions in-

stilled a renewed sense of commitment to both safety and personal well-being among the laborers.

- **Cultural Shift Toward Safety:** The event highlighted the importance of creating a culture where safety is prioritized, and workers are continuously motivated to contribute to a safe working environment.

CONCLUSION:

The Safety Awareness Program Mela organized by L&T Construction, in partnership with Don Bosco Migrant Services, was a resounding success. It not only marked the conclusion of Safety Month but also provided laborers with valuable tools, knowledge, and motivation to adopt safer practices on-site. The event exemplified the commitment of both organizations to fostering a safe, healthy, and joyful work environment, ensuring the well-being of workers. Through continued efforts like these, we can create a more informed, safer, and empowered workforce, contributing to the overall success of construction projects and the well-being of those who make them possible.



NO DRUGS AND DEPRESSION AWARENESS PROGRAM

FEBRUARY 13, 2025:

No Drugs and Depression Awareness Program was successfully conducted at the Migrant Labour Colony in Shollinganallur, Chennai. This event, organized by Don Bosco Migrant Services in collaboration with Tamil Nadu Mental Health Hospital (IMH), aimed to raise awareness among migrant workers about the dangers of drug abuse and the importance of mental health. Dr. Lakshmi, along with her team of mental health professionals, led the session, which was attended by 78 migrant construction laborers.

The program was designed to achieve the

following goals:

- **Raise Awareness on Substance Abuse:** Educating migrant workers about the detrimental effects of drug addiction, both physically and mentally.
- **Promote Mental Health Awareness:** Empowering workers to understand mental health issues, such as depression, and the importance of seeking help when necessary.
- **Provide Practical Resources:** Offering migrant workers information about available health services, counseling options, and support systems to address both mental health challenges and substance abuse.

Opening and Introduction:

- The session opened

with a welcome address from Don Bosco Migrant Services, which set the tone for the event.

- **Dr. Lakshmi** introduced the core topics of the session, explaining the psychological and physical dangers of drug addiction. Special emphasis was given to how these issues disproportionately affect the migrant community.

Dr. Lakshmi discussed the various types of substance abuse encountered by migrant workers, including alcohol and narcotic drugs.

Mental Health and Drug Addiction:

The link between substance abuse and mental health issues such as depression,

anxiety, and stress was highlighted.

Identifying Depression:

Workers were educated on the common signs of depression and were encouraged to seek help if they noticed these symptoms in themselves or their peers.

Resources and Support Systems:

Dr. Lakshmi provided information on available local resources, including health services, counseling, and helplines, specifically catering to migrant workers.

A total of 78

migrant construction laborers participated in the program. The attendees were highly engaged, asking questions and contributing to the conversation. Many shared personal experiences regarding mental health struggles and substance abuse, highlighting the relevance of the program to their lives.

The program received overwhelmingly positive feedback. Participants expressed appreciation for the knowledge shared and the supportive environment in which the session was conducted. Key takeaways from the feedback included:

- Breaking the Stigma: Many workers acknowledged

the stigma around mental health and substance abuse, with several participants noting that the program had helped to reduce this stigma.

- Desire for Continued Programs: Attendees expressed interest in more such awareness programs, emphasizing the need for regular sessions on similar topics.

- Empowerment and Support: Several workers mentioned that they felt more informed and empowered to seek help if they encountered mental health issues or substance abuse problems in the future.

The “No Drugs and Depression Awareness Program” organized by Don

Bosco Migrant Services, in collaboration with Tamil Nadu Mental Health Hospital (IMH), was a highly impactful and well-received initiative. The program successfully raised awareness on the critical issues of substance abuse and mental health among migrant workers, offering them valuable information and support.

Given the success of this program and the positive feedback from participants, it is recommended that similar awareness initiatives be held regularly to continue educating migrant workers, reducing stigma, and addressing the mental health and substance abuse challenges within this vulnerable community.





YOUTH EMPOWERMENT THROUGH CELEBRATION A GLIMPSE INTO THE BECCHI DON BOSCO BROTHERS' YOUTH FEAST 2025

FEBRUARY 16, 2025,

The Becchi Don Bosco Brothers organized a vibrant and engaging Youth Feast in Kavaraipeṭṭai, an event that aimed to celebrate the energy, creativity, and potential of young individuals, particularly those from the migrant community. The event was held with the intention of creating a space for the youth to come together, share their talents, and experience a sense of belonging.

The event was graced by the presence of Fr. Robert Vincent SDB from Ennore, who served as the chief guest for the occasion. Fr. Vincent shared words of encouragement, inspiration, and wisdom, emphasizing the importance of youth in shaping society and the critical role they play in building a brighter future. His speech set the tone for the day, instilling a sense of pride and

motivation among the young participants.

The Youth Feast saw the enthusiastic participation of around 40 young migrant individuals, who gathered to celebrate their shared heritage and cultural diversity. These young individuals, despite the challenges faced by the migrant community, displayed remarkable spirit and unity throughout the event.

A standout moment in the event was the cultural performance by the migrant youth. The participants showcased their talent through an energetic and well-coordinated dance performance on stage. The dance, which was a blend of traditional and contemporary styles, symbolized their journey, resilience, and the unity that binds them together despite the challenges of migration.

In a heartwarming gesture, the migrant youth presented complimentary gifts to all the attendees, as a token of appreciation for their support and participation. This act not only reflected the generosity and thoughtfulness of the young individuals but also highlighted the collaborative spirit fostered by the event.

The Youth Feast organized by the Becchi Don Bosco Brothers was a resounding success, providing a platform for young migrant individuals to showcase their talents, share their experiences, and foster a sense of community. With the valuable presence and guidance of Fr. Robert Vincent SDB, the event became a memorable celebration of youth empowerment, unity, and cultural exchange. It served as a reminder of the significant role that the youth play in shaping a vibrant and inclusive society.

AWARENESS PROGRAM AND SCHOOL ENROLLMENT DRIVE AT PVR CHAMBER, PUDUVOYAL

FEBRUARY 26, 2025,

An awareness program was successfully conducted at the PVR Chamber in Puduvoyal, where shirts were distributed to the children. This initiative was part of an effort to emphasize the significance of education in the growth and development of children, as well as to inspire parents to ensure regular school attendance.

There were approximately 40 children present at the PVR Chamber during the event. Of these, 23 children are currently attending school, while the remaining children were not enrolled in formal education at the time of the event.

Awareness Session for Parents:

During the program, a dedicated session was conducted to inform parents about the importance of education and its long-term benefits for the children's future. The session included guidance on how education fosters critical skills, such as problem-solving, communication, and personal development.

Parents were specifically encouraged to ensure that their children attend school regularly, as consistent attendance is vital to their academic success and overall development.



As part of the program, an enrollment drive was organized to facilitate the registration of children into local schools. The event successfully registered 33 children from the PVR Chamber for formal education.

As a token of appreciation, each child attending the event received a shirt, symbolizing support for their educational journey.

The event successfully registered 33 children for school enrollment. This represents a positive step toward increasing school attendance and fostering an educational environment within the PVR Chamber community. The event also fostered a stronger understanding among parents regarding the importance of sending their children to school, and many expressed their commitment to ensuring their children's regular attendance.

The awareness program at PVR Chamber was a successful initiative that not only provided essential information to parents but also led to a significant

increase in school registrations. This program demonstrates the positive impact that community-driven initiatives can have on educational access and regular school attendance. Moving forward, it is recommended that similar programs be conducted regularly to sustain and further encourage school enrollment in the community.

Follow-up Programs:

To ensure sustained engagement, follow-up sessions with the parents and children should be organized to address any issues related to school attendance and performance.

Continued Support:

Further assistance, such as educational materials or mentoring programs, could be offered to support the enrolled children in their academic journey.

Community Involvement:

Encouraging more community members to participate in educational initiatives could lead to greater involvement and a more supportive environment for the children.