

CASE STUDY FROM ASIA

**CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEM OF
EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER IN INDIA
Through Right To Food Campaign**

**Presented at the Celebration of
50th Anniversary of Mater et Magistra, Rome**

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CASE STUDY FROM ASIA

The Catholic Church in Asia has 25 Episcopal Conference spread out in

- 1. South Asia,**
- 2. South East Asia**
- 3. East Asia**
- 4. Central Asia**

The present case study is a model of how the issue of extreme poverty and Hunger was taken addressed by the Church in India

Amidst growing antagonism against Christians in many countries of Asia, this helps to serve the poor in response to the Gospels and the Catholic Social Teachings

SOME STARTLING FACTS ABOUT INDIA

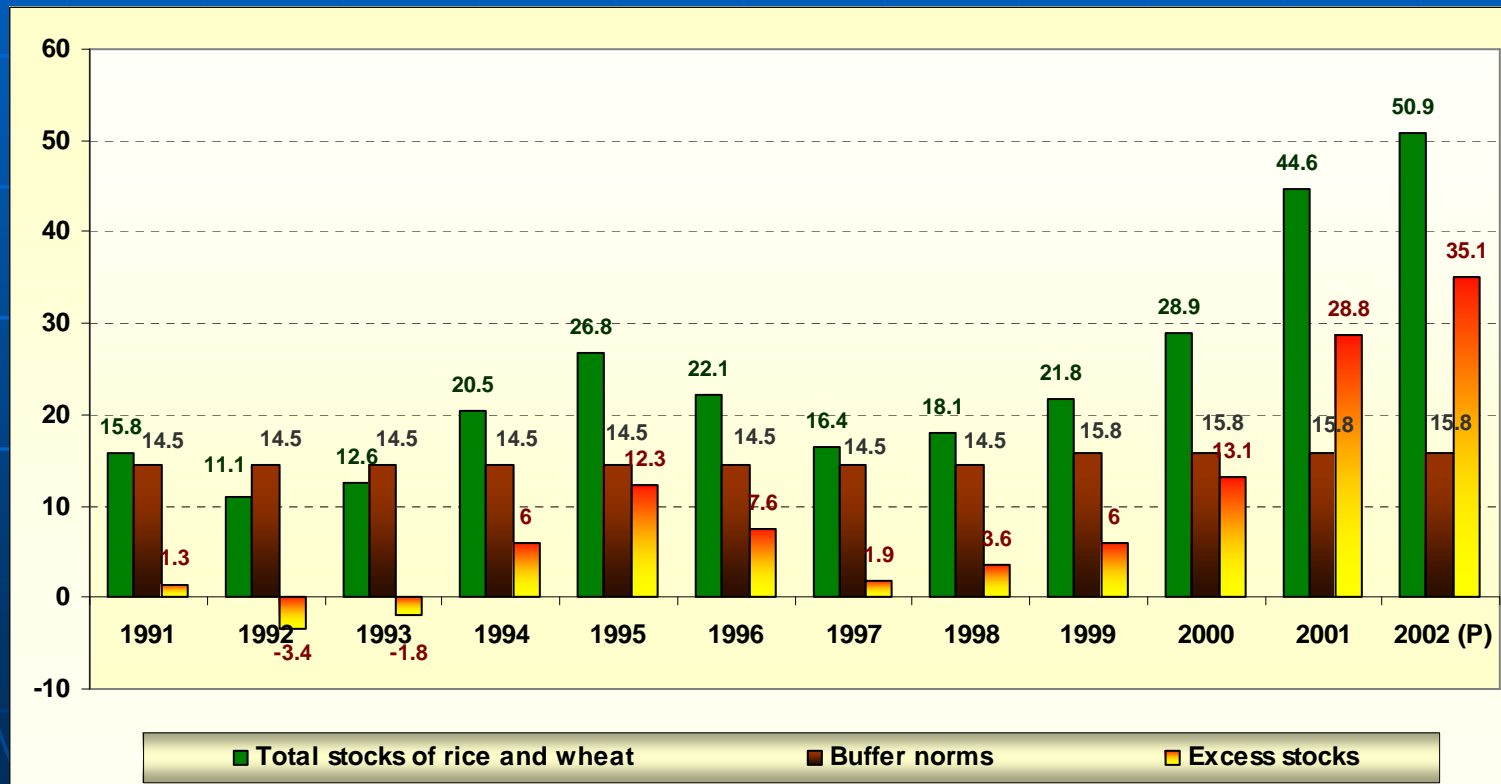
- **India is economically fast developing. But almost 35% of them are below poverty line**
- **Around 6000 children die every day due to malnutrition in India**
- **55% women & 53% adolescent girls anemic.**
- **77,000 maternal deaths per year**

Land of Contradictions

- **Hunger amidst plenty:
Largest number of poor
people in the World.**
- **Child Malnutrition Rate of
46%: Double that of Sub-
Saharan Africa.**
- **Widespread reports of
starvation deaths in 2000-01
when India had Record food
production- with Food Go-
Downs were full**

POSITION OF FOOD STOCK IN THE COUNTRY

Poverty and hunger amidst plenty



CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

- **Article 21:** speaks of Fundamental Right to life which is related to Right to Food.
- **Article 39(a):** speaks of the duty of the State to provide livelihood.
- **People starved to death when our Go downs were filled with grains in 2001.**
- **The Supreme Court gave orders with 9 specific Schemes on the Right to food.**
- **They were not well known among the poor and the marginalised.**

BIBLICAL AND CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

- **In response to the Gospel call of Good news to the poor and the CST, The JP Commission focused on these schemes and strategically took ahead to the poorest and the marginalised**
- **The JP Commission empowered the poor to claim their entitlements through the Food Schemes enacted by the Supreme Court**

GOVT SCHEMES WITH FOOD ENTITLEMENTS

1. **The Public Distribution Food subsidy Scheme for those living below poverty line**
2. **Antodaya – Annayojana – for Destitutes and the poorest without any support**
3. **ICDS- Child development Scheme to prevent malnourishment**
4. **Midday Meal - for school children**
5. **Maternity benefit schemes: Care for pregnant mothers**
6. **Family Benefit Scheme - those who have lost the breadwinner suddenly.**
7. **Old Age schemes - Pension to the elderly- BPL**
8. **Employment Guarantee Scheme for rural areas**

FOCUS: THE MARGINALIZED AND THE FORGOTTEN

1. Tribal people – Cut off from Society

2. Dalit – oppressed by Caste system

3. slum dwellers – mostly migrants

4. rural poor – No access for Dev.

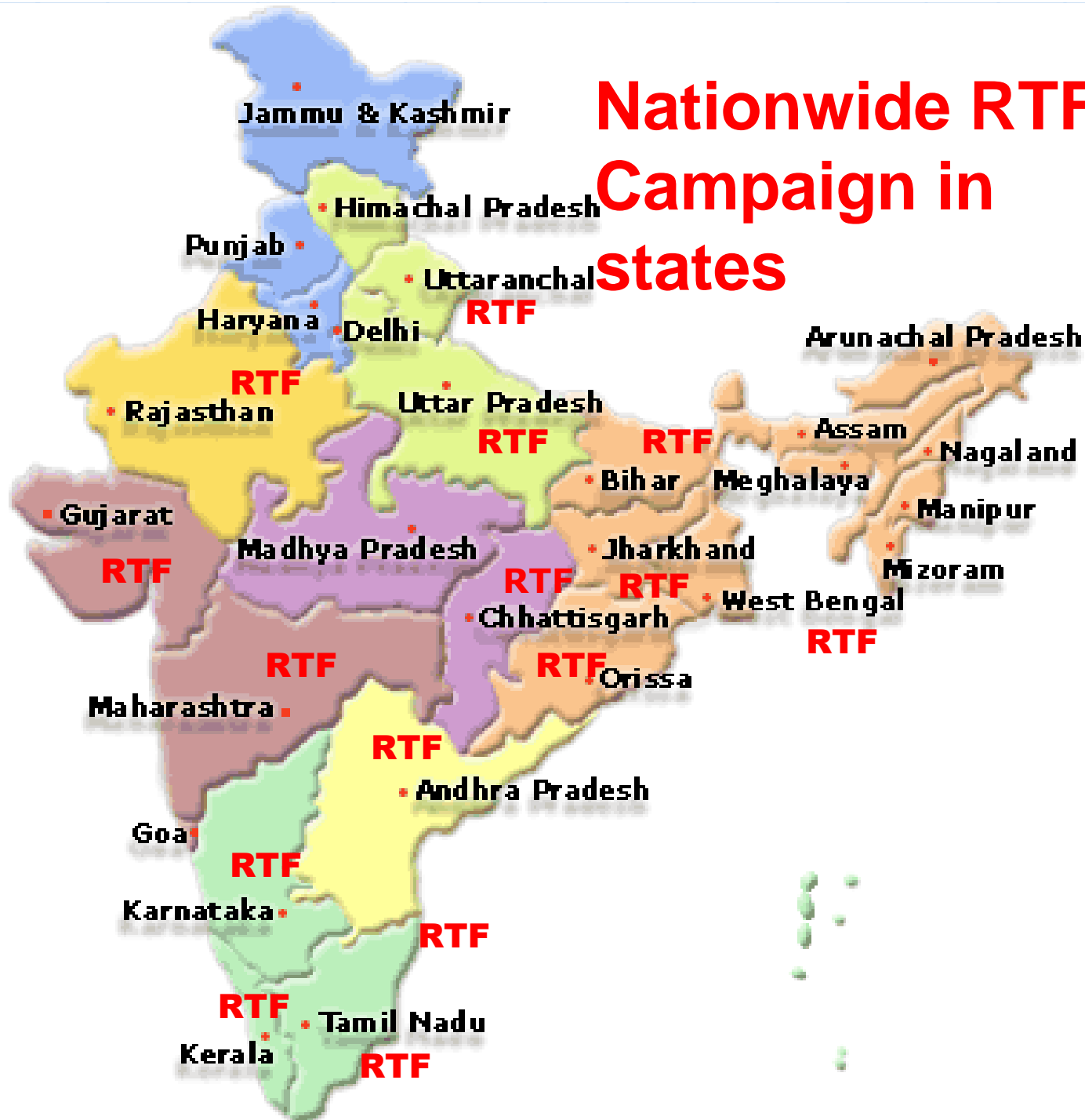
-irrespective of Religion or denominations.

-Non-Violent and Peaceful approach

-Concrete action plans and tangible results

- Covering 20 States in the country

Nationwide RTF Campaign in states



SPECIAL NETWORKS BIULT UP

- 1. The Supreme Court advisors,**
- 2. Committed political leaders,**
- 3. government officials,**
- 4. NGOs and social activists**
- 5. Lawyers forum and Networks**
- 6. people of other faiths**

SPECIAL STRATEGIES USED

- People friendly leaflets and Posters**
- spread in 12 Languages**
- Mass scale dissemination of knowledge of their rights**
- effective animation, advocacy, lobbying,**
- Giving Courage to stand together till they obtain their rights.**



TRAINING OF TRIBAL WOMEN IN RIGHT TO FOOD



Empowering tribal women to stand together for their Rights



Marginalised people given empowerment sessions to claim their Rights from the State



Lobbying with government officials and political leaders through public meetings for their Food Rights

Women delegates trained in street theatres to present the issues



JP COMMISSION EMPOWERED THE DIFFERENTLY ABLED PEOPLE TO CLAIM THEIR RIGHTS



Empowered Tribal women breaking illegal liquor bottles from Shops to save their families



SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RTF CAMPAIGN

1. Adoption of the Rights Based Approach

2. Empowerment of the powerless, the neglected, the most vulnerable,

3. Lobbying with & Active involvement of

- *Supreme Court commissioners for RTF*
- *Government officials for face to face interactions*

Face to face interaction with Govt. Officials in the village meeting to solve problems



Special Strategies used

- *User friendly Audio Visual literature in 10 Languages*
- **Posters – 10 Commandments on RTF**
- **manuals & CDs with powerpoints.**

- *Involvement of women, school children and teachers for Empowerment sessions*
- *effective use of the internet*
thejusticeandpeace.org

Wider Participation

- *Multi lingual and multi religious approach: Hindus, Christians, Muslims and non-believers etc*
- Nationwide network of lawyers (HRLN)
- Non-Government Organisations ,
- Self Help Groups,
- Basic Christian Communities, Neighbourhood Communities etc.

SPECIAL APPROACHES

- *Regional trainings in Regional languages*
- Training manual in 12 Languages
- Formation of a national and regional teams
- *Peaceful and Non-violent approach*
- *Face to Face interactions with Duty bearers – Govt officials*
- *Using Right to Information Act,*
- *bulidng into a Movement*

PROCESS AND IMPACT IN 3 YRS

No. of participants and Grassroots coordinators that underwent RTF trainings	37699
trainings conducted at local and Regional levels	847
No. of BPL (Below Poverty Line) cards were regularized to get the quota of grains	40705

Monitoring Mechanisms

No. of Village vigilance committees created	569
Women leadership in local government	238
No. of girls contacted in Govt schools under Midday meal scheme	16437
No of boys contacted in Govt schools under Midday meal scheme	24884

RECONGNITION FROM GOVT & SC

The Government of India through the Supreme Court commissioners and advisors have recognized the work of the Catholic Church through

- ❖ **User friendly literature**
- ❖ **Reaching the unreached**
- ❖ **Empowering the poor**
- ❖ **the peace approach and**
- ❖ **tangible results**

KEY PRINCIPLES FROM CST

We used the Catholic social teachings (CST) with their key principles

- **The option for the poor & marginalised.**
- **The Earth is God's gift. We are just stewards**
- **Solidarity in respecting human rights and upholding Human dignity**
- **Peaceful approaches**

Reaching out through the Media & Publication

1. Right to Food – Resource book
2. Just Peace! Quarterly Journal on
 - ❑ - Orissa - anti Christian Violence
 - ❑ Church & MDGs
 - ❑ - Movement Building
3. Use of Internet
thejusticeandpeace.org

Trainers Manuals and CDs:

- ✓ *Interactive CD* – Rights Based Approach to Development, contributions at the World Social Forum, Nairobi on Indigenous people's Rights
- ✓ *CD – Right to Food Campaign* – PowerPoint in 10 major Languages
- ✓ *Booklets on Right to Food Campaign* in Twelve Languages
- ✓ *10X10 Commandments* on Right to Food Schemes – folder Set . Ten Commandments on various issues of Justice

OTHER UNDERTAKINGS

- ❖ **Orissa - Anti-Christian Violence & killings**
 - Campaign through lobby with Govts.
 - Signature campaign
- ❖ **RBA Trainings** to various groups
- ❖ **India-Pak Peace Initiatives:**
People to People Peace Initiatives through the University youth in both Countries

OTHER ACTION PLANS FOR ASIA

Special Focus for next 3 yrs

- 1. Migration**
- 2. Indigenous people**
- 3. Climate change,**
- 4. Extreme poverty**
- 5. Arms reduction and MDGs**

Strategies

- 1. Input and exposure to the Bishops of Asia -BISA –
Bishops Inst.of Social Action**
- 2. Input and exposure to the JP Commissions of Asia
AISA- Asian Inst. Of Social Action**
- 3. Regional Workshops - South Asia, South East
Asia, East Asia and Central Asia**

U R most welcome