

History of Social Service League

From its inception Stella Maris College sought to sensitise students to a deeper awareness of social reality of the country and formed them to act responsibly to bring about social change. To achieve this goal a “Social Service League” was organised in 1948.

Student members of the Social Service League (SSL) visited the slums, conducted literacy classes and distributed medicines. The twenty years of service of SSL from 1948 to 1968 enhanced the students from the acts of charity (1948 -1950) to empower the less privileged under the highly qualified Social Worker, Mother Eanswida fmm, the head of the Social Work Department (1951). She was a trend setter in introducing Case study in the Social Service and effected concrete development.



Acts of Charity



Path breaking Efforts



In 1950-51, SSL adopted a slum called *Lalithanagar*. Student members mapped out the area, took the census, checked out health conditions, etc., but lacked a hall or shed to conduct activities. The very next year a variety entertainment was staged and Rs. 1330 was raised to build a shed.



Witnessing the need for a sustained development; a private diploma in Social Service was started in 1951 to train more social workers. It was the first of its kind in the whole of Madras city. Concrete results were the fruits of the determined work of SSL and DSS (Diploma in Social Service).

- Fifty-Four Children were educated in 1952.
- A group of twenty Stella Marians were trained in first aid by St. John Ambulance Brigade and were awarded with certificates. In February 1952, Stella Maris was the only College among representatives of the Social Works of the City of Madras, to form the Guard of Honour at the airport for the arrival of the World Chief Commissioner of the Brigade, Countess Mountbatten.



- An elementary School was opened with the help of the Corporation of Madras in January 1954.





Srimathi OC Srinivasan, Director of Public Instruction on her visit to the College expressed,

“This College has exhibited today a replica of all its activities. They have indeed taken a lot of trouble to show us exactly what practical things they have been doing and what practical training they have been giving to their students, and it has been a very great pleasure and a great privilege for me to see this exhibition and to go through every single activity. It is not as though they have attempted a few things here and a few things there. They have been doing very systematic work and the whole is shown in an integrated plan of welfare for elders and welfare for children. In taking up social work, they have not only helped women and children who were under-privileged and required their help, but they also saw to it that they taught them how to work for themselves and earn for themselves.”



In 1954 -55 the most notable development was the formation of the Stella Maris Social Welfare Corporation, which included members of the College League, past and present, students of the Diploma Course and professional social workers, doctors and nurses.



- 60 children of servants and dhobies in Lakshmipuram, and Royapettah were given their daily milk powder, and the undernourished were given food and tonics.



- Diploma students had trained workers for a future creche.
- Medical care to the adopted slums were regularised and in 1955 -56 service was extended to Nochi Kuppam and Quil Tope Colony.
- “Lalithanagar Milk Co-operative Society” and " Stella Maris Ladies' Sewing Society" and St. Helen's Day Nursery in Lalithanagar started functioning on the principle of aided self-help.
- The Social Service Diploma Students attended the Indian Conference of Social Work in Bangalore in January 1956 and contributed their experiential suggestions to the forum.

In Dec 1956, the famous Indian Philanthropist Mrs. Clubwala Jadhav MBE visited the College and appreciated the dedicated service of the students.



- A “Domestic Sewing Society” with fifteen young girls was started in 1957. When funds for training them were sinking low, the College Welfare Association soon rectified the situation and by means of a Benefit Film Show raised in a few days a sufficient amount for the whole year.

- In 1957 the SSL members attended a camp organised by Bharat Seva Samaj at a village outside Madras.

- In October 1957 a Social Service Centre was established in Teynampet by the diploma students of Social Service. A sewing training programme was started in Teynampet in 1958.



- The highlight of 1958 was to introduce the social case work, a new concept which was introduced worldwide. Stella Maris adopted the method immediately and analysed each individual problem and helped individuals to outgrow of the tie down conditions.



- A new slum called Anthonyagar was adopted under the service of the Welfare Corporation of Stella Maris College in 1962.



- The welfare corporation of Stella Maris functioned till the dawn of National Service Scheme which was introduced in India in 1969 and Stella Maris readily joined the nationwide social service.