

## **Woman-to-Woman Worldwide India Journey – 2017**

- 1. Title**
- 2. India Info**
- 3. W2WW**
- 4. Group pic**
- 5. Orientation – Importance of preparation and orientation; also important to take the time to debrief**
- 6. Quick outline of itinerary**
- 7. Overview collage – let pics runs**
- 8. Durgapur – summary**
- 9. Diocese Women convention and dinner – let pics run**
  - a. Mrs. Rita Dutta, President of DWFCS Diocesan Women’s Fellowship for Christian Services - received invitations to attend convention, became honored guests
  - b. Seated in front, invited to bring greetings from stage
  - c. Lots of dancing and beautiful costumes
  - d. Message of Strength...The Force is Within Her PS 46:4-6
  - e. Extremely welcoming and friendly; giving and receiving hospitality
  - f. Performance by children’s orchestra...children rescued and saved from exploitation; each child is a certified musician; children nurtured and valued are

succeeding in school in general education as well as music

- g.** Dance team finished 3<sup>rd</sup> on TV show competition
- h.** Dinner served at diocese by men who were also the cooks...it was delicious and beautiful and they took pride in their work...truly appreciative of our gratitude

**10. Dinner (more pics, let run)**

- a.** Lavish welcome
- b.** Beautifully decorated with green lights in trees and bushes, pink canopy/tent
- c.** Women wearing saris in a rainbow of colors
- d.** Outdoor meal followed by dancing and music; apparently chose music they thought we would like, i.e. Abba
- e.** Exchanged gifts – we receive 2018 planners and gold silk stoles
- f.** Instead of goodbye we are taught “See you later”

**11. Durgapur – children and neighborhood (let pics run)**

- a.** Toured neighborhood and facilities
- b.** Eye clinic, sewing school, general school, dormitories; saw the operating room, and witnessed part of an eye surgery; most of their services are free; have facilities for overnight recovery. The ophthalmologist is a Hindu but loves working for the church because he

finds it so peaceful there. The sewing school makes and mends uniforms and they keep a book of samples of each student's projects as a record of their work;

- c. Bishop Dutta told us about a girl whose mother died, dad remarried, then the second wife died; girl got sick with 105 temperature; church asked why he wasn't getting treatment for her – village people convinced him that she was cursed so he decided to let her die; now through school and is being trained as a nurse

## **12. Moumita + pic**

We met Moumita Biswas of the Diocese of Delhi who was attending the convention. She works to improve the treatment of women and girls throughout India. Abuse and rape are rampant even within the church. It is an accepted part of the culture.

## **13. Manju's story + pics**

One woman noticing the need of one child blossomed into this ministry with children who live in her community where they are at risk in a neighborhood of battered buildings, and not just trash but trash heap

The school began because of Manju. Her mother sold her at age 12 to 52-year-old man for 3000 rupees (just under \$50 USD); her mother was an alcoholic and when she realized what she had done, went to the church to ask for help. They

paid the man a lot of money (even more) to release her...now she is through school...a dancer and a teacher; to be married on December 20.

School started because of Manju with 10 girls, now 350 students; she was rescued in 2006.

We also got to meet her fiancé Lukas.

**14. Malda – Baladura Safe House, Anti-human trafficking (Advance pics one at a time until pic of Mary and little girl...then let run)**

- a. Example of lavish hospitality: Pulled up in van, clearly waiting for us
- b. Procession was forming and led by a drummer and a dozen women in beautiful green saris with pots with plants in them balanced on their heads through the crowd of churches gathered.
- c. Throwing marigold petals, singing, dancing, kids gathered around, some in the windows
- d. Seated us in a shaded space; little children washed our feet; we had the opportunity to bless them; no dry eyes; overwhelming welcome
- e. Taken inside for coffee and sweets then joined the congregation assembled outside

- f.** We were taken to a stage that had been built specifically for this occasion then received our official welcome including words, music and dancing we were invited to share so we sang “This Little Light of Mine” and used our phones as candles
- g.** Treated to many dances; some by the girls from the safe house, some from women from the churches, dancers were many ages; dancers wore beautiful saris and jewelry with makeup for the performance – all representing the heritage of different regions of India.
- h.** They invited us to dance with them trying to teach us a few steps/moves
- i.** All followed by another extravagant meal of rice, noodles, chicken and fresh bananas; huge amounts of food were being cooked outside and we were able to see the whole process
- j.** Toured safe house Met the children
- k.** We met a girl whose father had been trafficked, became like an orphan with no family or protection, father’s papers were taken so once he escaped still couldn’t go home; father is safe now but still too dangerous to return home.
- l.** During our debriefing that evening Lorna shared with us a phrase that Deenabandhu, our area executive, uses which is “Gospel from the Margins”: reminder

that we have to guard against acting as if we have something others don't...we aren't bringing God to people; God is already there working...sometimes it is our job to point out what is already happening and identify it as "God"...sometimes it's the people we are visiting who have Good News to remind us of "God among us."

**15. Kolkata: Swadhina (Self-Esteemed Women)**

- a. Founded in 1986 to address women's empowerment and equality; met the women at their annual gathering then had time to meet with some of the women in leadership
- b. Used metaphor of bird needing both wings to fly...both wings must be strong: women's empowerment and gender justice must both be strong and effective to work.
- c. Four pillars of Swadhina
  - i. Women's health as women tend to neglect themselves.
  - ii. Education for women, particularly financial literacy.
  - iii. Income generation for women and families.
  - iv. Enhanced organized strength of women.  
Strength for women to organize, strength in numbers.

- d.** Laws are changing and women gaining some rights but the reality doesn't necessarily match the picture set by laws
- e.** They work to not only assist and support women in getting their rights but also to educate them about what their rights are; work to support victims of human rights violations
- f.** Activists seeking better situation for women and Dalits; descent based discrimination
- g.** Their politicians are emboldened by the language of our leaders...reflected on current political context...racism in US bolder, i.e. Nazis, etc., since Obama presidency; women continue to be marginalized and elected officials bolder in their negative speech about women in face of woman presidential candidate
- h.** Swadhina serves as a bridge between government policies/bureaucracy and a better life.
- i.** Engaged in National Campaign on Human Rights; 1990 founded by Dalits (untouchables) – caste system still in tact
- j.** Rape, gang rape, mass killing
- k.** Backlash to asserting human rights for lowest class: 55, 000 crimes last year, 3 women a day murdered





- i. When describing the project and needing funding for 6 months we were surprised that the total was only \$6,000 ....got really excited about the possibility of Disciples Women providing this kind of support to begin this project. \*\*\* One of our projects for the year...I have cards if you want to give a gift for Mother's Day in honor or in memory of someone.
- d. Helping train mothers to be able to support children and not be vulnerable to traffickers – they or their children

## **17. Indian Samaritans**

- a. 95,000 children born in one day, 650,000 in villages; school only guaranteed until age 14; parents work so kids not in school and after school become victims of sexual abuse and violence
- b. Constitutional rights to all children
- c. Cure India:
  - i. Clubfoot
    - 1. 4,000 children per year in US
    - 2. 99,000 per year in India
  - ii. 800 of 1,000 mission hospitals have closed
    - 1. Leadership Internally has shifted
    - 2. People were expected to leave
    - 3. Theology shifted

- iii. 800 million people in India with less than \$1 a day to survive; 60 million children live malnourished; 9,000 die per day from malnourishment
- iv. Give parents info to do follow-up treatment and shoes needed free of charge
- d. Education/Empowerment/Employment Center/We Educate – 240 children; Break the cycle of poverty
- e. We Plant: plant fruit trees outside the boundaries; save the seeds and replant; 709 seek banks; every village should have an orchard by 2030
- f. Walupsha
  - i. Married when 2, husband was 4; all 4 sisters married same day
  - ii. Started living with husband when 11, husband died when she was 22
  - iii. Her daughter stopped going to school when father died
  - iv. Church's duty to make sure she achieves dream of being doctor
  - v. Girl home alone afternoons
  - vi. No money, exploited by men for sex
  - vii. Church took care of her to keep her from being exploited
  - viii. Never been to school, became a mother at 13

**18. Delhi: CSEI (run pics)**

**19. Delhi neighborhood – Pat, Renae, Ann visit**

- a.** Visited a neighborhood of Delhi. Couldn't go by car because road is narrow and rutted with trash and sewage in street; animals wander freely. ..cows, dogs, pigs.
- b.** Lots of kids playing in the street and looking at us wondering what we were about. When we smiled, they smiled; when we waved; they waved. Lots of giggles and grins.
- c.** We went up some narrow stairs to the top of a house where women teach school children who are not in school or help with homework. They were completely engaged and wanted to talk with us. We had a bit of a problem since this translator seemed to be struggling a bit. The kids showed us some of the crafts they had made including puppets, garlands, and paper crafts.
- d.** We told them a little bit about us and asked if they had questions...or if they could tell us about themselves. One woman asked "Why are you here?" This is something we always discuss at orientation to prepare the delegations. It's important that we don't let those we are visiting misinterpret our intentions...that we are there to just gape and pry and pity or that we think we are going to 'fix' them....that is not what we are about, it's insensitive and

insulting, and unfortunately that is sometimes their experience with visitors...especially Christians...too often act like we are bringing God when the truth is God is already there. I explained that our understanding is that the wisdom is in the room...that no one person has all the wisdom but rather each of us has a part of wisdom and we wanted to learn from them what they have to teach us. The mood changed and the women all smiled and wanted to talk more to us. They shared with us that what they needed was to learn to embroider clothing...if they could learn that they could make a living for themselves.

- e. This was the most difficult part of our time in India for me. I could not get these women out of my head. Of all the things they wanted in the world was to learn to embroider...if they could embroider they could make a living. Why couldn't I just stay there for a few weeks and teach them? Why couldn't I fix it? I started thinking about doing a 3 month mission internship...about how I could teach them, and ask for donations to provide supplies for them, help them to set up a website to sell their products, or carry products back home to sell. I thought about teaching them punch embroidery that could be done even faster, maybe teach them patchwork quilting that

they could put decorative embroidery on. I wondered how I could make that work...what my family would say...but how could I not stay and do what I could to help. It took me a long time to be able to talk about these women without weeping....I became painfully aware of my privilege...country of origin, class, family support, ethnicity, etc.

- f.** Really struggled with this visit...worst poverty I have ever witnessed, poor health conditions, and among all of it...hospitality, welcome, and hope for a better future.
- g.** Given time I realized that I was forgetting everything we try to teach before we go. We aren't there to fix anything...we are there to accompany...to find ways to sustain what they are already doing...to work with our global ministry partners who work alongside and know what is needed and what is most helpful.
- h.** This visit has really stayed with me...once you talk and laugh and look into the eyes of someone it's difficult to just walk away. This is the blessing of being in partnership with global ministries.
- i.** Another one of the projects they are working on is a Youth Tech Hub; given a gift last year for laptop and printer and have set up an e-café where people can

apply for school, passport pictures, etc. Hoping to expand this project to help more students.

- 20. Project : Anti Human trafficking**
- 21. Project: ERC for CSEI (Educational Resource Centers for the Center for Social Equity and Inclusion)**
- 22. Delhi Women's Sewing Project\*\***
- 23. How to give to projects**
- 24. More about India – invite participants to share**
- 25. Pic of Delegation**