INTRODUCTION

I am very happy to present the Annual Report of VOSARD for the year 2016-17. One more year of great achievements has been added to the history of VOSARD. It was a fruitful year by reaching out to more people through successful implementation of different projects and programmes. During the reporting year the programmes were executed well to reach VOSARD’s services to the beneficiaries at the maximum level.

REPORT ON MAJOR PROGRAMMES/ACTIVITIES

1. COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING

It is one of the prime programmes of VOSARD since beginning, which aimed at guiding the marginalized and disadvantaged people to achieve sustainable development in their lives and communities. Over 10,000 families of the target groups located in the remote hilly terrain of Idukki District were organized into 625 Self Help Groups (SHGs). 30 Clusters and three apex federations were also formed to coordinate the functions of SHGs through decentralized planning, local linkage, collaboration and collective action. The formation of people’s organizations includes community based organizations target men & women, Persons with disabilities (PWDs), small & marginal farmers and senior citizens. Structure of different people’s organizations promoted by the organization is shown below:
Awareness creation, leadership training, skill training, livelihood promotion, microfinance and taking up issues with government are the major activities dealt through SHGs and federations.

2. COMMUNITY BASED REHABILITATION (CBR) PROGRAMME

In 2002, this organization initiated CBR programme in six Panchayats of Idukki District of Kerala for addressing the needs and issues of 2006 PWDs identified from the Panchayats. Gradually the programme was expanded to 18 Panchayats in the district. Also, VOSARD has been successful in bringing eight district level Disabled Person’s Organizations under an umbrella of state level network. The initiatives taken by VOSARD to address the issues and needs of PWDs during last 14 years could bring in positive changes in the lives of differently-abled persons and their families. Organizing PWDs in to self help groups and linkage of the groups with PRIs/ Govt. schemes/ financial institutions/ private agencies is a remarkable step taken by VOSARD for capacity building and sustainability of the members and groups. The organization also initiated steps for constituting a District Local Level Committee (LLC) of National Trust, distribution of Guardianship Certificate and
introducing Niramaya Insurance scheme for the first time in the district. Many NGOs have visited the ‘VOSARD model CBR programme’ and this organization has facilitated them to replicate the programme in their respective operational areas. Major activities conducted during the year are:

i. **Strengthening of State level network of DPOs:** Seven Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs) functioning in seven districts of Kerala were directed to form a state level network named as ‘Kerala Confederation of Differently Abled (KCDA)’ and the network was registered under society’s act. 8,465 Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) are members of the network organized at various levels viz. 529 Village level DPOs (VDPOs), 60 Panchayat level DPOs (PDPOs) and seven District level DPOs (DDPOs). The CBR Coordinator made periodical visits and conducted capacity building activities for proper functioning of the DPOs at various levels with the support of CBR Forum, Bangalore. Joint meetings, leadership trainings, exposure visits, advocacy, networking and linkages to facilitate accessing of government schemes, etc were also conducted.

ii. **Outreach rehabilitation services to children with disabilities:** Rehabilitation services to 75 children with various types of disabilities were planned and executed during the year with CHAI-LF support. Rupees one million granted by the supporting agency and an equal amount mobilized locally were utilized to address various needs of the children. Major interventions made under health, education, livelihood and social inclusion domains are:

- Two medical screening camps conducted to identify 68 new cases
- School enrolment-14 (Anganwady-6; normal school-5; special school-3)
- 25 youth attended Career guidance
- Skill training-26 youth
- Livelihood support-8 (Goat rearing)
- Formation of SHGs-15
- Leadership training to 180 DPO leaders
- Caregivers training given to 58 parents of severely disabled children
- Aids & appliances-11
- Correction surgery-8

3. **CARE AND PROTECTION FOR SENIOR CITIZEN**

The programme aims to improve quality life of the senior citizens through self-help initiative and promoting community based care and support services by actively engaging the families and other stakeholders. Besides, it also strives to protect the rights of the senior citizens, promote livelihood among the active and semi-dependent senior citizens, guiding them to access health and welfare services and encourage them to participate fully in family and social life. This programme was launched in 2013 in two Panchayats of Idukki district viz. Chakkupallam and Erattayar the support of MISEREOR, Germany. Second phase of the the programme started in 2016 by expanding the programme to three more Panchayats viz.
Kanchiyar, Kamakshi and Vandanmedu. 716 senior citizens were organized into 49 Elder’s Self Help Groups (ESHGs). Major interventions in the project are:

- Formation of Elders SHGs
- Formation of Panchayat level federation of ESHGs
- Seed money to elder’s groups
- Medical camps
- Routine health checkups (diabetes, BP)
- Advocacy and lobbying
- Availing Social Security Schemes
- Promotion of Income generation activities
- Awareness classes promotion of physical, mental and spiritual health.

4. AGRICULTURE PROMOTION AND FOOD SECURITY

Since 2010 onwards VOSARD has taken special initiatives to promote food security among rural population by directing the farmers to cultivate vegetables, cereals, tubers, fruit bearing trees, etc along with cash crops. VOSARD ensures that the natural resource conservation technologies like watershed management, soil conservation, rainwater harvesting, organic farming, etc., are well within the cognitive and physical reach of the small farmers and rural households. To make the initiative effective and sustainable; the farmers were organized in to SHGs, Clusters and federations. In the beginning 825 small and marginal farmers from Vandanmedu Panchayat were organized into 50 farmers groups. Then the groups have been federated into four cluster level associations and a federation. The farmers’ federation – ‘V-Farm’ – is a registered body to supervise and monitor the functions of farmer’s SHGs and Clusters functioning in Vandanmedu Panchayat. Though the project was successfully completed by the end of 2013; the project activities viz. dairy farming, goat rearing, organic farming, cultivation of vegetables & other food crops, construction of rainwater harvesting units, biogas plants, etc are still continuing by utilizing the community revolving fund created from the project. The major achievement of the programme is that now the farmers are cultivating food crops viz. vegetables, tubers, paddy, plantain, etc along with the main crops – cardamom, pepper and coffee. Earlier they used to buy vegetables from the market that were produced by applying dangerous chemical pesticides and manures.

5. INTEGRATED WATERSHED PROGRAM IN VATHIKUDY PANCHAYAT

This 4-year project supported by Karl Kubel Stiftung, Germany was started in 2014 to improve quality of lives of the rural people and addressing the negative effects of environmental degradation in Vathikudy Panchayat of Idukki district of Kerala. Major components of the project are: enhancing capacities of the target people, promoting sustainable agriculture & livelihood opportunities, enabling to protect soil & water and facilitating to mobilize local resources. Direct benefits of the project are being reached out to 1,000 marginalized families of small/ marginal farmers and daily workers. The following achievements were recorded while the project is nearing its completion:
Construction of soil & water conservation structures like: stone bunds, contour trenches, water percolation pits, stream bank protection, gully plugs, live fencing, etc. could convert 30 acres of waste land into arable land.

Support for agriculture and livelihood promotion activities has benefited 700 families to increase their family income by 30% at the minimum.

Beneficiaries from 900 target families were organized into 60 SHGs, three clusters and a federation. The federation named, Vathikudy Farmers Association (VFA) is a registered society that manages the functions of SHGs and clusters.

6. WELTWARTS - BRIDGE BUILDER PROGRAM (BBP)

It is a cultural exchange program of Germany, in which young volunteers are arranged for voluntary services in Indian NGOs for eight months. Under BBP program two German students are sent to VOSARD every year for doing voluntary work for eight months. The volunteers help the organization in making brochure, short films, case study and teach English in local schools. During the stay in India they try to learn our culture, tradition, food habits, etc. This program of German government promotes cultural exchange between India and Germany. During the year three volunteers – Mr. Florian, Ms. Carla and Ms. Melissa - visited VOSARD during August 2016 to March 2017 and involved in various programmes of the organization.

7. JALANIDHI - DRINKING WATER SUPPLY AND MANAGEMENT

JALANIDHI is a project of Kerala Rural Water supply and Sanitation Agency (KRWSA) of Kerala Government. VOSARD is the support organization to provide technical and social support to beneficiary groups. The main objective of the project is to supply clean and safe drinking water to the people in Chakkupallam Panchayat. The project is implemented in participatory way by forming Beneficiary Groups (BGs). Survey, source identification, construction, distribution etc., are managed by the BGs. 23 BGs have been formed to manage supply of safe drinking water to 1,350 households with an estimated budget outlay of Rupees 5 crores. Type of work done under the project are:

- Renovation of existing water supply schemes
- Construction of new schemes
- Rainwater harvesting units (managed by 6 BGs)
- Construction of community sanitation facility – public toilets

8. PROMOTION OF NON CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES
Protection of environment and nature is inevitable for reducing negative effects of modernization. In this context, all efforts to familiarize and promote non-conventional energy sources like biogas and solar energy among the rural population are made by the organization. Sensitization and training programs were organized and motivated people to adopt environment protection measures. Construction of biogas plant using Ferro cement technology, which is cost effective and long lasting, is widely accepted by the people. Supply of solar lamps helped to replace kerosene lamps in 550 families. It also helped education of the children by increasing study hours in black out days.

9. CHILDREN AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

(i) CHILDLINE 1098: It is a project under Integrated Child Protection Scheme of Ministry of Women and Child Development, Govt. of India and we have been implementing the project in Idukki district since 2011. The project aims to reach out to the children in distress and those who need help. A Collaborative centre at Kattappana is providing 24-hr toll free outreach (Help line No. 1098) service to the entire Idukki district. Besides, a Sub-Centre of Idukki Childline to cover Kumily region is also managed by VOSARD. The CHILDLINE project provides assistance to children in distress particularly street children, neglected and delinquent children and children facing physical, mental and sexual abuse. The main interventions of CHILDLINE project were: shelter, medical help, repatriation, rescue, sponsorships, emotional support and child protection at the large context. A total of 637 cases (Collab – 384 and Kumily Sub Centre – 253) were registered and need based support services provided during the year.

(ii) Chavara Jyothi Education Promotion (CJEP) Programme: Since 2008 onwards around 500 poor and bright students are financially supported every year. The children were given interest free loan in the beginning of academic year to meet essential expenses for joining the school/college. They repaid the amount in ten installments and the repaid amount is again distributed to another 500 students in the next year. This way the programme goes on since last eight years. Besides this financial support, study materials such as books, dictionary, umbrella, school bag etc., are also distributed to children with the support of local benefactors and
agencies. Life skill development training, leadership training, cultural programmes, career guidance workshop, etc are also conducted for holistic development of the children.

(iii) **KELI Scholarship for Professional Education:** With the support of Rajagiri Outreach Service Society (ROSS), Kochi 15 poor students pursuing professional courses were given financial support ranging between Rs. 15,000 to 20,000. ROSS channelized the financial support (Rs. 20 lakh) from KELI, Switzerland.

10. **VOSARD AS A MOTHER NGO**

Representatives of seven NGOs from across Kerala are partners of VOSARD for availing professional support and guidance in replicating successful social work models like CBR, three-tier system of people’s organizations and resource mobilization strategies in their area. Exposure visits and trainings were arranged for the NGO staff and follow up visits/ trainings were also arranged for the community leaders in their respective operational areas. Some of the prominent NGOs availing the services of VOSARD are:

- Jeevajyothi Apex Federation of the disabled (JAF), Idukki
- Saphalyam, Thiruvananthapuram
- Sahridaya Sparsan, Ernakulam
- Navadarsan, Muvattupuzha
- Navachaithanya, Kottayam
- Aadarsh, Pathanamthitta
- Jyotis Wynadu
- Punarjeni, Kollam
- Sahayagiri Health Care Society, Thodupuzha

11. **INFRASTRUCTURE**

   a) **Vehicle for commuting children and youth with disabilities:** MIVA Netherlands and CHAI-LF Secunderabad supported to purchase a vehicle (Trax Cuiser) for commuting children and youth with disabilities from their homes to Vikas Vidyalaya and back for providing rehabilitation services like: special education, therapy and ADL training.

   b) **ICU Ambulance:** State Bank of India supported to purchase an ICU Ambulance for providing emergency medical services to the rural population living in remote villages of Idukki and Kottayam districts. Now, a Traveller Ambulance fitted with ICU equipments is functional at Mary Queen’s Mission Hospital, Kanjirappally.

12. **EXPOSURE TO UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

Students from various disciplines (BSW, MSW, BBA-LLB, MPH, B Sc-Agr) and colleges visited the organization for block placements and
exposure to practical social work. 18 students from various fields visited the organization during the year. The young scholars are given exposure and guidance according to their career needs through experience sharing, field visits, case studies, survey, street play, etc.

13. INAUGURATION OF VOSARD OFFICE AT KATTAPPANA

The long cherished dream of establishing a resource centre at Kattappana for coordinating the programmes of VOSARD was fulfilled during the year. A new building for the purpose was constructed near Kattappana Block Office. CMI Kottayam Province granted 15 cents of land and CEI, Italy granted generously to complete the construction. Inauguration of the building was held on 19th October 2016. Blessing of the building was done by H.E. Mar Mathew Arackal, Bishop of Kanjirappally. The inauguration ceremony meeting was presided over by Rev. Fr. George Edayadiyil, Provincial. Inauguration of the office was done by Mr. Joice George, M P and the key note address was delivered by Mr. Rishiraj Singh, Excise Commissioner amidst a large number of eminent personalities present on the occasion. Establishment of the new center facilitates the organization to implement and monitor various programmes effectively.

CONCLUSION

I acknowledge with thanks the support and guidance extended by various national/international donor agencies, government departments, NGOs and benefactors, without which effective implementation of the programs would not have been possible. It is worth mentioning that the voluntary initiatives of community leaders, active participation of the beneficiaries/stakeholders and team work of the staff are the important factors behind progressive achievements of the organization. Above all, motivating approaches of the Patron, Executive Members, well wishers & the CMI St. Joseph’s Province community are the guiding forces in our all endeavors. I extend my sincere thanks to one and all.

Kumily                  Fr. Jose Antony
19.10.2017               Secretary