

Sr. Julie Bruss, SND and Faby Gomez: 2014 Site Visits in India and Thailand

We flew from Rome to Zurich and then on to Mumbai (Bombay) in the state of Maharashtra, and entered into an entirely different experience.



In Mumbai, we visited the national office of the National Domestic Workers' Movement (NDWM) and spent time with one of the workers' groups. Belgian Sr. Jeanne Devos, ICM, founder of NDWM, and her assistant, Sr. Christy, shared details about the structure and the finances. The two sisters also served as our guides throughout our time in India.

Before we left Mumbai, we also met with representatives of the Asian Movement of Religious Against Trafficking (AMRAT) and the Conference of Religious India (CRI).



When we reached Ranchi, the capital of the Indian state of Jharkhand, we visited the shelter home for children and joined the celebration of National Children Day (commemorated on November 19, the birthday of the first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru). The mayor of Ranchi and her deputy joined in the celebration and addressed the children.

While in Delhi, we visited domestic workers' groups there and then traveled to Agra in Uttar Pradesh to visit the Taj Mahal.

We spent a short time in Bangalore, in Karnataka, where we presented at a meeting of CHAI (Catholic Health Association of India). We addressed a group of about 80 sisters involved in healthcare, many of whom are grantees. While in Bangalore, we were able to meet with two sisters who expressed concerns about the administration and philosophy of the National Domestic Workers Movement.

Our last stop in India was in Chennai, in the state of Tamil Nadu, which we reached by overnight train from Bangalore. We visited the same kinds of groups as we did in other regions. One difference that was evident is that English is used less here; many women spoke only Tamil.

We stayed with the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (ICM's) who operate a school for the deaf, a school for the blind, and hostels for adult women who participate in rehabilitation activities of sewing and embroidery. We met with some individual sisters there who wanted to meet to discuss projects and possible proposals.

India may be one country, but visiting the different states is like visiting different countries in terms of language, culture, geography, climate, economics and food. When we completed our visit, we had a clearer understanding of what Sr. Sreeja had tried to convey.



When we left Chennai (Madras), we flew to Bangkok and on to Nong Khai, situated along the Mekong River in the northern part of Thailand. Here, the Good Shepherd Sisters shared the work that they do, and pointed out especially the projects that have benefited from Fund for Sisters grants.