

Asir Ebenezer

Director, CSI Board of SEVA

(Social Empowerment: Vision in Action), Church of South India Synod

Summary Profile

Ordained minister of the Church of South India in the Diocese of Madras for 26 years since 1992 presently serving as Director CSI-SEVA of the CSI Synod. Served in different urban and rural parishes of the diocese since, and as Director of the Diocesan Board for Socio-economic concerns (1999 – 2004). During this time served on the Executive Committees of the Madras Christian Council of Social Services (MCCSS) and the Tamilnad Christian Council (TNCC) and its Economic Life Committee (TNCC-ELC) also. In the service of the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) between 2004 to 2014, as the Executive Secretary for Urban Rural Mission, Executive Secretary of the NCCI Commission on Policy and National Governance, and the Finance Secretary of the NCCI. During this period also served as the Officiating General Secretary of the NCCI for a year in 2010.

During the tenure as Finance Secretary of the Council helped clear the financial crisis of 8 years (1996 – 2004) and helped evolve & establish finance management systems in NCCI, dealt successfully the litigations preferred by the then General Secretary of the NCCI in the Maharashtra Charity Commission, Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court, and the Supreme Court (2009); as the Officiating General Secretary helped restore normalcy, giving leadership in administration and management of the Council and in team-building exercise of a beleaguered staff team, before welcoming the present incumbent to the office of the General Secretary in December 2010.

Since June 2014, serving the Church of South India Synod as the Director of the Synod Diaconal Concerns, widely known as the Board for Diaconal Ministry (BDM) and now christened CSI-SEVA (Social Empowerment: Vision in Action); responsibilities include co-ordinating, guiding and accompanying the socio-economic empowerment interventions of the 24 dioceses of the CSI across 120 districts in 5 southern states of India, devising and implementing Synod level campaigns especially on girl child, gender equity and disability access, Improving partner relations, Enhancing resource mobilisation, etc.

Have been a resource in several local, national, regional and global church and ecumenical gatherings for over two decades including in the last assembly of the World of Churches (WCC) in Busan Korea, as also the previous one in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Invited to accompany WCC's recent Global initiative with UNICEF on Child rights (since June 2015) as resource on experiences in harnessing potential of the Churches for rights and advocacy campaigns. Resource on Transparency, Accountability and Responsibility (TAR) to different Churches and Ecumenical Organisations including the NCCI, UELCI and its member churches, CSI and the EMW.

Conducted a study on the Rights of Religious minorities in South Asia and the responses of the National Council of Churches in each of the six countries in South Asia. This study was done on behalf of the South Asia Ecumenical Forum for Peace and Security and as part of a global study platform of the WCC – Churches' Commission on International Affairs (WCC-CCIA). During Tsunami 2004 co-ordinated and presided over CCA-JIDS Round Table for sharing Asiatic Resources between the PCT, PCK, PROK, NCC Japan on the one hand and the representatives of NCCs in India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Myanmar on the other relating to mitigation of affect of Tsunami on lives and livelihood of peoples of the affected Asian Countries. Subsequently shared the program area session of the CCA – JIDS in the CCA Assembly 2006, Chiang Mai, Thailand. Giving leadership to the Bread for the World promoted South Asia Network

on Peace which mentors the Youth for Peace Network in South Asia based on the LCP framework and the Do No Harm (DNH) Guidelines.

Co-ordinated evaluations of the ministries of ecumenical organisations including that of the All India Sunday School Association on behalf of the EMW Hamburg, Germany. Accompanying Grassroots service organisations and National ecumenical organisations in planning and monitoring their activities. Facilitated process of evaluation of the Interfaith Coalition for Peace (Church of Sweden), Henry Martyn Institute (Multiple partners), Andhra Christian Theological College (EMW, Hamburg, Germany).

Engaged as a core group member in the Strategic planning process of the National Council of Churches in India and the Christian Medical Association of India, New Delhi. Accompanying the Henry Martyn Institute (International Centre for Research, Interfaith Relations and Reconciliation), Hyderabad on matters of Financial Management and Program planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Presently assisting the Council for World Mission (CWM) as a member of the Strategic Planning Group in preparing the CWM Strategic Plan (2019 – 2029), serving on the Working Group to facilitate closer working relationship between the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the ACT Alliance (Geneva, Switzerland) in the global, regional and national levels, invited to be one of the organisers of the 2019 Partners meeting of the Trinity Church, Wall Street, USA (Zambia July 2019); and invited to evaluate the current project management systems and facilitate evolution of protocols for the future projects of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC, Hannover, Germany). Engaged in the global discourse on evolving a 'New International Financial and Economic Architecture (NIFEA)' a CWM, WCC and WCRC joint initiative to seek alternatives to World Bank, IMF oriented architectures.

Co-facilitated the State-wide Churches' protest over passing of the Tamilnadu Freedom of Religion Act leading to the repealing of the draconian legislation in Tamilnadu – the only state in the country to repeal such a law. Followed up this activity with a lead co-ordination role in planning and executing strategy for the subsequent parliamentary elections when the 'India Shining' campaign was addressed and the UPA I was formed.

Skilled in planning, implementation and monitoring mission programs and Churches' interventions in communities and society, particularly in fields of socio-economic and geo-political interventions of Churches at the level of the diocese and local congregations on issues and concerns relating to HIV/ AIDS, human sexuality, the aging, the small, marginal and tenant farmers and landless agricultural workers, unorganised and migrant workers in the cities, issues and concerns relating to the rights and dignity of the dalits and adivasis, and the human rights violations in the inhuman practice of manual scavenging.

Able to discern priorities, programmatise, and draw program/ project proposals, including budgeting, activity-plan, cash-flow, PME protocols, for church and ecumenical organisations – both for involvement of the local congregations, synods of churches and for addressing the issues at the National, Regional and Global levels. Has developed rapport with many regional and global partners and has earned their goodwill as a professional peer.

Professionally trained at the graduate and post-graduate levels in diverse fields of Commerce, Social Work (specialising in Medical and Psychiatric Social Work) and Theology, with a proven record in biblical-theological articulation skills.