



Berhampore, West Bengal

Don Bosco Prison Ministry: Restoring Dignity and Hope Behind Bars

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[Animation, Don Bosco Prison Ministry,](#)

News written by: Fr. Joe Prabu SDB



In the heart of Berhampore Central Correctional Home, where despair and isolation often cast long shadows, the Don Bosco Prison Ministry (DBPM) is quietly rewriting the narrative of incarceration. Established in 1999, this faith-driven Non-Governmental organization is proving that transformation, not punishment, is the key to lasting reform.

Rooted in the Salesian spirit and guided by the words of Mahatma Gandhi—"Crime is the outcome of a diseased mind and jail must have an environment of hospital for treatment and care"—DBPM has been a lifeline for hundreds of inmates, offering vocational training, counselling, legal aid, and after-care support that go beyond the prison gates.

Under the leadership of Fr. T.L. Francis SDB, DBPM operates on the principle that every life, no matter how broken, holds promise. The ministry caters to a diverse prison population that includes undertrials, convicts, women, transgender individuals, and those battling addiction and mental health challenges. Its rehabilitation model is comprehensive, blending skill-building with emotional and psychological healing.

Courses in Motor Mechanics, Driving, Electrical Work, Computer Literacy, and Tailoring provide inmates with practical skills to support a new start after release. Activities like sports, music, and games help restore a sense of normalcy and community. Particularly commendable is the ministry's focus on released female inmates, who receive sewing machines and financial assistance to rebuild their lives with dignity.

emotionally, socially, and economically—helping prevent reoffending and reintegrate them into mainstream society. Yet, as the organization looks to the future, it faces the challenge of upgrading its vocational tools and technology, vital to keeping its programs relevant in today's fast-changing job market.

Another growing concern is the increasing number of young offenders entering correctional facilities. DBPM has issued a clarion call to the wider Salesian community and civil society to collaborate in proactive, preventive interventions that can steer vulnerable youth away from the path of crime.

A recent visit to the facility left this reporter deeply moved. The commitment, compassion, and quiet strength of the DBPM team—especially Fr. Francis—shine as beacons of hope in a system often criticized for its harshness. Their work is a living testament to the Salesian mission of accompanying the young, especially those at risk, with compassion, dignity, and hope.

As India moves steadily toward a more restorative justice model, the Don Bosco Prison Ministry stands out as a pioneering force, unlocking not just prison doors but human potential.





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