

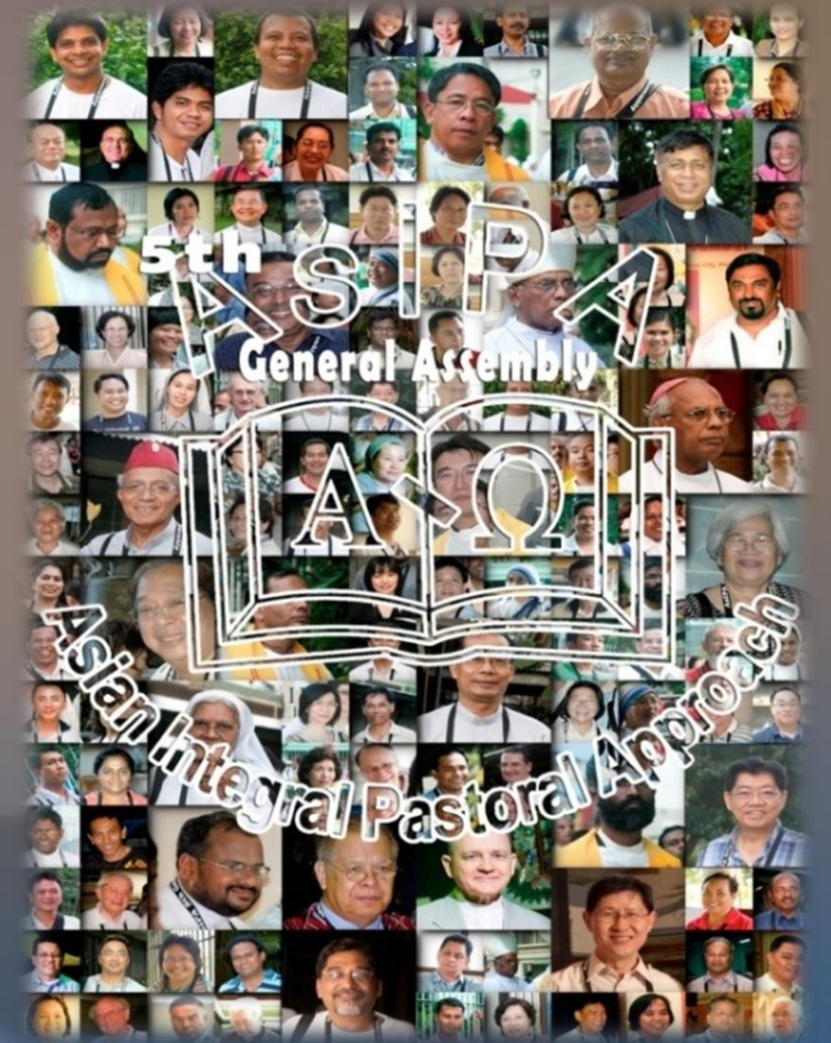
Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) in Asia

**A Synthesis of stories and situation of SCCs/BECs
reported by coordinators in Asia**

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Introduction to Asia



Diversity in Culture and Religion

- Asia is the most culturally and religiously diverse continent, with countries exhibiting vast differences in economic and political development.
- It is home to Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity, creating a mosaic of languages, traditions, and ethnic groups.

Vast Population

- Asia is home to over 4.5 billion people, nearly 60% of the world's population.
- The continent covers 30% of the earth's land.



The Catholic Church in Asia

1

Minority Status

Catholics represent a small percentage of the population in many Asian countries:

- Bangladesh (0.2%), Japan (0.4%), Pakistan (0.8%), India (1.6%), and Indonesia (3%).
- Vietnam (7%), South Korea (11%), Philippines (80%)

2

Triple Dialogue

The Catholic Church in Asia engages in a triple dialogue: with the poor, interreligious dialogue, and dialogue with culture.

Vision of SCCs/BECs in Asia

FABC Influence

- The FABC has inspired and guided the Asian Churches to implement communion of communities and the spirit of the Second Vatican Council.
- The vision for SCCs/BECs in Asia was articulated during the Fifth Plenary Assembly of the FABC in 1990.
- As a result, SCCs/BECs have been introduced and promoted in most Asian countries since the 1990s.

A way of being a missionary synodal Church

- As the 16th synod has addressed, “We are called to enhance SCCs’ potential.”(The Synthesis Report, 16.m). SCCs/BECs “live the closeness of the day-to-day, around the Word of God and the Eucharist”(18.e) and by their nature foster a synodal style.



AsIPA

: **A**sian **I**ntegral **P**astoral **A**pproach

1

Establishment

AsIPA Desk was established in 1993 under the Office of the Laity of the FABC as a framework for building SCCs/BECs.

2

Key Components

AsIPA focuses on being Asian (contextual awareness and inculturation), Integral (harmonizing faith and life), Pastoral (training laity for mission, caring for all), and an Approach centered on Christ, community, and mission.

3

Current State

While the AsIPA Desk was disbanded in 2018, revitalization efforts continue at diocesan and national levels.



AsIPA General Assembly VI

Chintana Centre, Nainamadama, Sri Lanka

October 18 - 24, 2012



National and Diocesan Teams for SCCs/BECs

National Teams

- National teams for promoting SCCs/BECs exist in 7 countries
 - India and the Philippines have active and organized teams.
 - Bangladesh, Korea, and Sri Lanka have ongoing activities.
 - Myanmar and Thailand have relatively less active teams.



SCCs Leaders Gathering in Indonesia

Diocesan Teams

- Diocesan teams play a crucial role, with exemplary cases noted in Indonesia, Korea and Sri-Lanka.
- These teams work at various levels of activity to sustain and promote SCCs/BECs.



Workshop for SCCs Leaders in Bangladesh

SCCs/BECs Implementation in Asia

India

All the 163 dioceses promote SCCs/BECs.

<https://scccommissionindia.org/>

Philippines

80% of dioceses engaged in SCCs/BECs formation

<https://cbcpbec.online/>

Bangladesh

5 out of 8 dioceses emphasize SCCs/BECs

Korea

5 out of 15 dioceses engaged in SCCs/BECs

Sri-Lanka

8 out of 12 dioceses emphasize SCCs/BECs



SCCs Gathering in Korea



SCC Gathering in Sri-Lanka

SCCs/BECs as the Foundation of Parish Pastoral Council(PPC)

Parish Pastoral Council

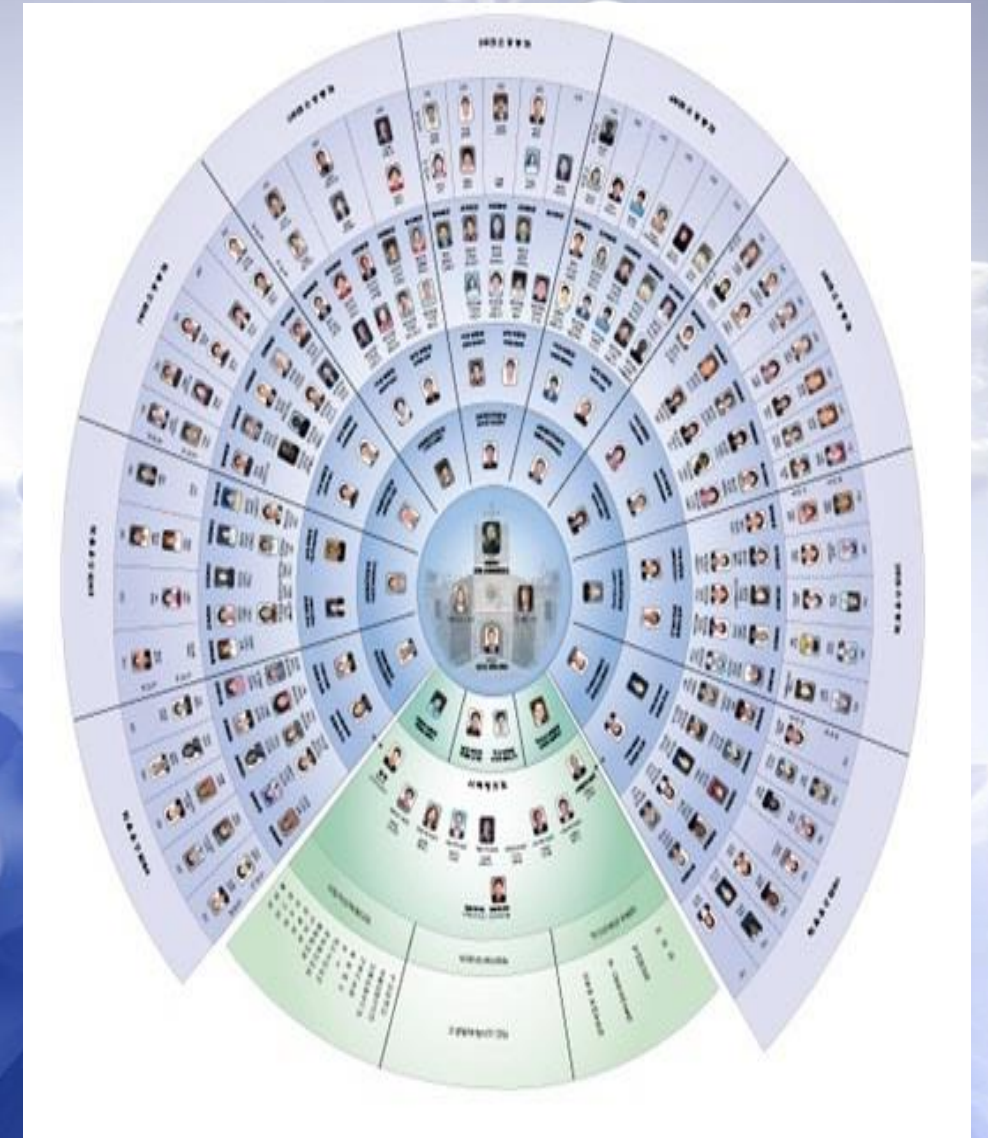
SCCs/BECs serve as the foundation and center of the PPC in many regions.

Implementation

This structure is particularly prevalent in the Philippines and India at the national level, and in Indonesia, Korea, and Sri Lanka at the diocesan level.

Grassroots Approach

This structure allows for a grassroots approach to parish management, planning and decision-making.



PPC based on SCCs/BECs in Korea

SCCs/BECs Meetings and Activities

1 Frequency and Location

SCC/BEC meetings are held weekly or monthly in homes, parishes, chapels, or mission stations.

2 Main Activities

Activities include Gospel sharing, prayer, formation, and social activities.

3 Participants

Meetings are attended mostly by women, with some youth and men participating.



SCCs Gathering in India

Driving Forces for SCCs/BECs Growth



Diocesan Leadership

Diocesan bishops and pastoral teams' vision and efforts drive SCCs/BECs growth.



Asian Values

Community-centered Asian values support SCCs/BECs development.



Lay Leadership

Trained lay leadership and commitment foster SCCs/BECs expansion.



Support for the poor

Support for the poor and interfaith dialogue promote SCCs/BECs growth.



Contributions of SCCs/BECs

Lay Empowerment

SCCs empower the laity to fulfill their baptismal responsibilities.

Renewing Parish Pastoral Structure

SCCs renew parish pastoral councils from the bottom up.

Growth and Transmission of Faith

Regular Bible sharing and social activities foster deeper faith in mission.

Lay Formation

SCCs provide training grounds for becoming missionary disciples of Jesus.

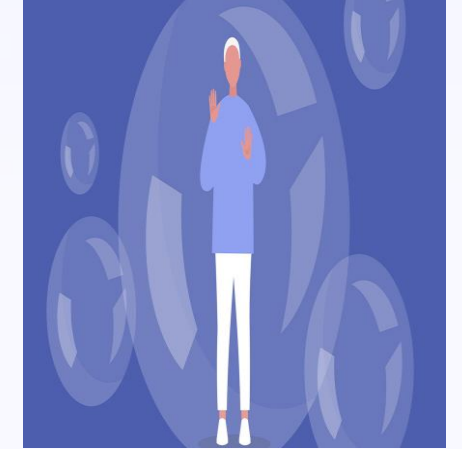
Interfaith Dialogue, Social Outreach

SCCs foster cooperation with non-Catholics and social activities.



SCCs Gathering in Thailand

Challenges of SCCs/BECs



Clericalism

Clericalism can hinder lay empowerment.

Leadership Recruitment

Difficulties in recruiting and training leaders.

Youth and Men Engagement

Limited engagement from youth and men.

Social Involvement

The need for greater social involvement.

Individualism

Modern lifestyles, material priorities challenge community.



Hindu neighbors and children attending BEC activities in India

Testimonies from BECs Members : India

Overcoming Barriers:
A testimony from India highlights the transformative power of SCCs/BECs in overcoming social barriers, such as caste discrimination.

In a village where the SCC/BEC started with only five Christian families, the community grew to 18 families, fostering unity and shared celebrations across caste lines.



SCCs Gathering in Korea

Testimonies from SCC Leaders : Korea

Leader's Joy:
SCC leaders in Korea share their joy in revitalizing SCCs.

Through outreach efforts, including personal calls and creating a group chat, the leader successfully re-engaged members who had stopped attending, building a vibrant community where different generations come together.

Perspective from the Coordinator of SCCs : Sri-Lanka

SCCs require a pastoral mindset and openness to the New Way of Being Church.

Mr. Nimal Perera (Secretary of National SCC Team in Sri-Lanka, 5th Sept. 2024)



“SCCs cannot be taught but have to be caught. Leaders and pastors who resonate with the pastoral care approach of Jesus would immediately catch this.

In Sri-Lanka, too, the majority of pastors (including bishops, major religious superiors, and priests) are still not open to this New Way of Being Church (Community). The greatest challenge is to convert them.”

Sri-Lanka celebrated the year of SCCs in 2021 declared by CBCSL.



Perspective from the Coordinator of BECs

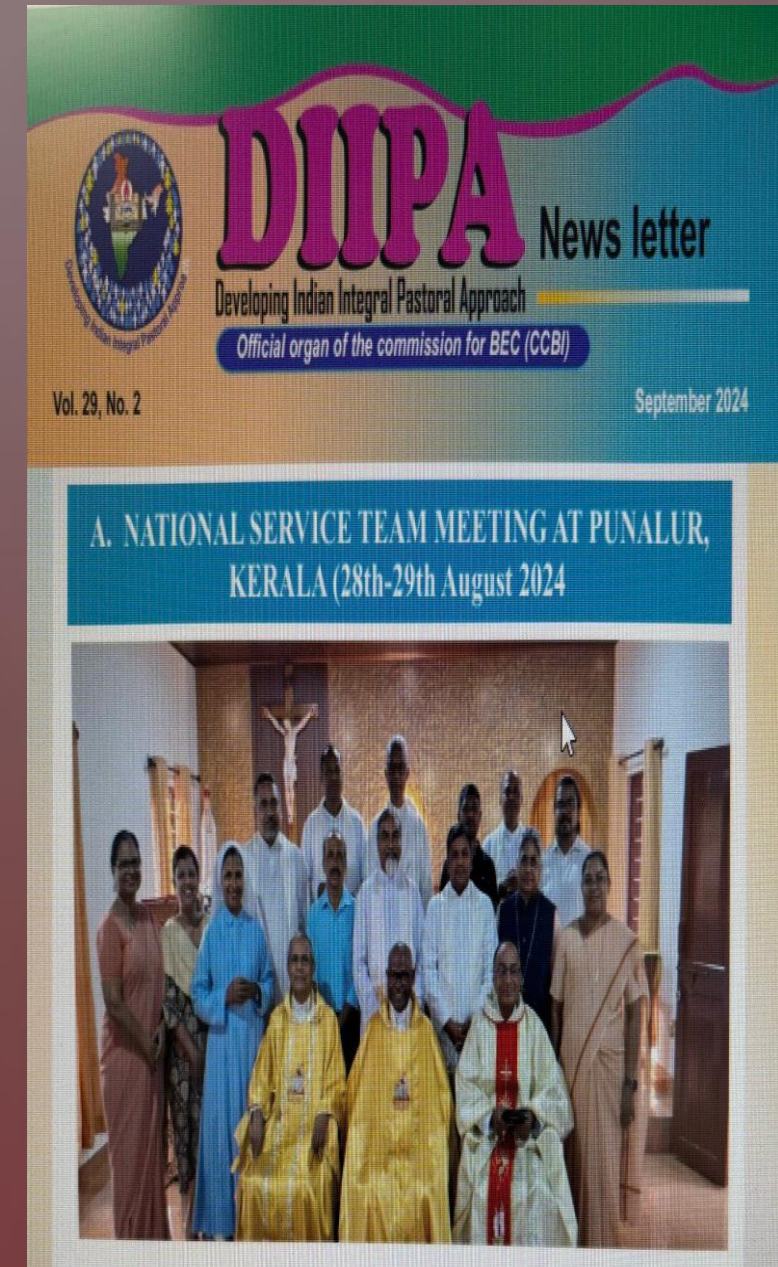
: India

**Driving force of BECs is Training leaders.
Need to build BHCs.**

Fr. George Jacob, SAC (Executive Secretary of CCBI
Commission for BECs, India, 6th Sept. 2024)



“We in India are focusing on training leaders and trained teams. We have well-trained National/Diocesan Service Teams and Resource Teams. These teams come together to evaluate and plan programs, which is the driving force behind the work of BECs. We need to slowly work towards forming Basic Human Communities through interreligious dialogue and issue-based meetings, discussions, and celebrations.”



News Letter for BECs in India(Sept. 2024)

The Future of SCCs/BECs

1

Active Lay Participation

SCCs/BECs need increased active lay participation.

2

Ongoing Formation

Need for continuous education and training on the vision, content, and leadership for clergy and laity

3

Expanding Scope

SCCs/BECs need embrace basic human, ecological, and digital communities.



Visiting SCC Members House in Bangladesh



SCCs Gathering in Bangladesh



SCCs/BECs and Synodality

1

Grassroots Representation

SCCs/BECs provide a voice for the faithful, poor, and marginalized in the synodal process.

2

Inclusive Dialogue

SCCs/BECs foster listening and discernment for pastoral planning and decision-making at the grassroots level.

3

Social Transformation

Through civic engagement, SCCs/BECs influence public life and contribute to social transformation.



Conclusion

Ongoing Evolution

SCCs/BECs continue to adapt to community needs. They represent an ongoing journey together, not a finished product

Church on the Move

SCCs/BECs embody a Church capable of learning and transforming communities in the synodal path and spirit.

Shaping a Synodal Church

SCCs/BECs play a crucial role in creating a welcoming, listening, and inclusive Church in Asia.



The 22th SCCs National Assembly in Korea in 2024



The 5th BEC National Assembly in the Philippines in 2023

Thank you

