Diocese of Kurnool

Role and Responsibilities of the Commission Secretaries (Orientative Guidelines)

1. Introduction

In the light of the diocesan pastoral vision that seeks to build *"communities of faith as families of believers"*, the Commissions of the Diocese of Kurnool play a vital role in animating, coordinating, and implementing the pastoral mission of the Church.

These Commissions are constituted in correspondence with the structures of the **Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI)**, the **Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI)**, and the **Telugu Catholic Bishops' Council (TCBC)**. They serve as instruments of communion (*communio*) and mission (*missio*), fostering collaboration between the universal, national, regional, and local Church.
In accordance with the spirit of the **Code of Canon Law (cf. cann. 394 §1; 511–514)**, the diocesan bishop promotes coordinated pastoral action, and the commissions assist in realizing this mandate through specialized pastoral care.

2. Identity of a Commission Secretary

A Commission Secretary is not simply an organizer, but:

- A **pastoral animator** who inspires and mobilizes.
- A **bridge-builder** between the Diocese and national/regional Church structures.
- A **listener and discerner**, attentive to the signs of the times.
- A **facilitator of synodality**, fostering collaboration among clergy, religious, and laity.

He/She exercises this role in communion with the Bishop, who is the chief shepherd and moderator of all pastoral activity (cf. can. 391).

3. Role at the National and Regional Level

Commission Secretaries serve as official representatives of the Diocese in their respective sectors. Their responsibilities include:

- Maintaining active communication with the CBCI, CCBI, and TCBC Commissions.
- Provide timely information to these bodies whenever requested

- Receiving, studying, and disseminating guidelines, policy documents, and pastoral orientations issued at national and regional levels.
- Participating in meetings, seminars, and workshops organized by these bodies.
- Representing the Diocese of Kurnool by articulating its pastoral realities, challenges, and contributions at broader ecclesial forums.

The Diocese shall ordinarily support participation in such meetings by providing necessary financial assistance (travel, registration, etc.), recognizing this as an essential dimension of ecclesial communion and co-responsibility.

4. Role within the Diocese

Within the Diocese, Commission Secretaries are entrusted with the responsibility of contextualizing and implementing the pastoral directives received from higher bodies, always in harmony with the diocesan pastoral plan and under the guidance of the Bishop (cf. can. 391).
They are to:

- Prepare a **Strategic annual/triennial Plan** for their respective commission.
- Submit the plan for approval to the Bishop.
- Form and animate a **team or sub-commission**, including clergy, religious, and competent lay faithful (cf. can. 228 §1).
- Encourage co-responsibility and participation of the laity in the mission of the Church (cf. can. 204 §1).
- Organize programs at diocesan, deanery, and parish levels.
- Periodically review and evaluate pastoral initiatives.

5. Specific Areas of Responsibility, For example

i. Bible Commission

- Promote love for Sacred Scripture (cf. *Dei Verbum*, 21–25).
- Develop programs such as Vacation Bible Schools, Bible quizzes, and Scripture study groups.
- Facilitate access to the Bible in families and communities.
- Engage collaborators, including catechists, religious, and trained laity.

ii. Commission for Migrants

- Identify and accompany migrant Catholic families within the Diocese.
- Ensure their integration into parish life and sacramental participation.

- Promote pastoral care inspired by the Church's teaching on migrants (cf. *Erga migrantes caritas Christi*).
- Coordinate welfare initiatives addressing their socio-spiritual needs.

iii. Commission for Women

- Promote the dignity and vocation of women (cf. *Mulieris Dignitatem*).
- Ensure women's participation in decision-making bodies where applicable (cf. can. 228).
- Organize leadership formation and empowerment programs.
- Encourage active involvement of women at all levels of ecclesial life.

iv. Liturgy Commission

- Ensure faithful implementation of liturgical norms (cf. can. 838).
- Promote active participation of the faithful (cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 14).
- Organize formation programs for clergy, religious, and laity.
- Foster liturgical music, decorum, and meaningful celebrations.

v. Health Commission

- Collect information of all the Doctors/Nurses/Medical officers of the diocese of Kurnool
- Promote the healing ministry of Christ (cf. Mt 25:36).
- Organize medical camps and health awareness programs.
- Collaborate with healthcare institutions and volunteers.

vi. Family and Laity Commission

- Strengthen Christian family life as the "domestic Church" (cf. *Familiaris Consortio*).
- Conduct pre-marriage courses and post-marriage accompaniment.
- Promote lay participation in the Church's mission.

vii. Youth Commission

- Accompany youth in their faith journey (cf. *Christus Vivit*).
- Organize youth gatherings, leadership programs, and formation initiatives.
- Make sure that the youth participate actively in the regional and national youth programs
- Initiate programs for school drop outs, coaching centres, job oriented courses to help the youth in finding jobs etc.
- Foster missionary spirit and social responsibility among youth.

viii. SC / BC / ST Commission

- Promote justice, dignity, and inclusion of marginalized communities.
- Advocate for equal opportunities within Church structures.
- Take initiatives to fight for justice, abolition of 1950 Presidential Order concerning the SC status for Christians.
- Develop empowerment and awareness programs.

ix. Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue

- Promote unity among Christians (cf. *Unitatis Redintegratio*).
- Foster respectful dialogue with other religions (cf. *Nostra Aetate*).
- Encourage collaboration for peace and social harmony.

x. Vocation, Clergy, and Religious Commission

- Promote vocations to priesthood and consecrated life (cf. can. 233 §1).
- Organize vocation camps and discernment programs.
- Support ongoing formation of clergy and religious.

xi. Prison Ministry

- Provide pastoral care to prisoners (cf. Mt 25:36).
- Organize visits, spiritual assistance, and rehabilitation initiatives.
- Collaborate with civil authorities for the welfare of inmates.

xii. Doctrine and Theology

- Organise seminars to study the magisterial teaching of the Church especially the new encyclicals for clergy, religious and lay faithful

6. Collaboration and Accountability

All Commission Secretaries are accountable to the Bishop and are expected to:

- Submit **annual reports** of activities and finances.
- Participate in diocesan pastoral review meetings.
- Work in collaboration with other commissions, parishes, and institutions.

7. Financial Responsibility and Resource Mobilisation of Diocesan Commissions

i. *Annual Diocesan Allocation*: The Diocese shall make an annual financial allocation to each Commission according to its pastoral priorities, programmes and available resources. The Secretary of the Commission shall prepare a realistic

annual plan and budget and ensure that the amount allotted is used prudently and exclusively for the approved purposes.

ii. *Responsible Stewardship and Accountability*: The Secretary is entrusted with the responsibility of administering the allotted funds with prudence, integrity and accountability. Every expenditure should serve the mission of the Commission and should be properly documented. A brief financial report, together with the necessary supporting documents, shall be submitted to the Diocese as part of the annual report of the Commission.

iii. *Mobilising Resources within the Diocese*: The financial responsibility of a Commission should not depend entirely on the diocesan allocation. Secretaries are encouraged to mobilise resources from within the Diocese by presenting the vision and activities of their respective ministries to the parishes and individual donors. The faithful should be invited to participate not merely as donors but as partners in the mission of the Church, contributing according to their ability, time, talents and resources.

iv. *Transparency Inspires Generosity*: Transparency, accountability and a clear pastoral purpose create trust, and trust inspires generosity. When people see that resources are being used honestly, responsibly and for a genuine pastoral purpose, they are more willing to join hands and support the ministry. Every Commission, therefore, should cultivate a culture of openness, responsible stewardship and shared ownership, so that the faithful may feel that their contribution is truly helping to build the Church and serve her mission.

8. Conclusion

The effectiveness of the Commissions depends on the dedication, creativity, and pastoral zeal of the Secretaries and their teams. Rooted in prayer, guided by the Word of God, and inspired by the teachings of the Church, they are called to build a vibrant, participatory, and missionary Diocese. May their service contribute to the growth of a **synodal Church**, walking together in faith, hope, and charity.

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