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Center for Research, Training and
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SUBALTERNS

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Editorial

The world is in the midst of a serious crisis due to rising conflicts. The greatest threat to peace and security in the world is the war between Russia and Ukraine, which has undermined the system of global peace and security under the United Nations Charter of 1948. The invasion of Ukraine by Russia from 24 February, 2022, onwards is a blatant violation of international rule of law and the targeting of Ukrainian civilian infrastructure and the genocide of Ukrainian civilians is a gross violation of international humanitarian law. Conflicts leading to violence and war leads to widespread destruction and suffering for people of conflict-ridden regions of the world. In an era of globalization, conflicts in one part of the world also affect all nations in the world economically and in other spheres of life. The horror of the images of war is a wake-up call for all people to dedicate their lives towards achieving peace and reconciliation among different communities at the local level and national level as well as among nations at the global level. We live in a world with people having different identities based on nationalities, gender, race, tribe, caste, culture, class, language, ethnicities, religions, regions, occupations, and so on. Often these identities of communities are used for political mobilization by projecting other communities as threats, which is often the root cause of conflicts. The neo-liberal economic system

Peace and Reconciliation in the midst of Conflict

has resulted in rising inequality and socio-economic and political marginalization of peoples. Dominant models of development have left millions of people from marginalized sections of society without opportunities for a dignified living. Indigenous peoples and other people discriminated on the basis of their caste, race, ethnicity, gender or religious affiliation have been engaged in a struggle for justice and human dignity, which often causes conflicts with the more dominant and powerful elite in society who seek to perpetuate their power in all spheres of life. Fundamentalism, intolerance and ethnic-religious-political conflicts have been a source of polarization of communities, which often gives rise to violence and unspeakable brutality. More than ever before, there is a need for peace and reconciliation between communities in conflict with each other based on justice and mutual respect. In a conflict-ridden world, all men and women of goodwill are called to seek to build bridges and be ambassadors of peace founded on reconciliation and justice. India has been a country that has the lived experience of people of diverse communities largely living in peace and social harmony for seven and a half decades. However, there has been sporadic conflicts based on caste, religion and ethnicity, which have resulted in violence and communal riots in certain regions of the country. In recent times, there is

a systematic targeting of minority communities by non-state actors as well as different institutions of the State. There is also a rise in hate speech openly calling for genocide, economic and social boycott and even rape of women of minority communities. Such trends of inciting hate against minority communities could lead to violence and even genocide against minority communities. India is known to have produced people such as Mahatma Gandhi, who is hailed as an apostle of peace and non-violence in the world. His method of satyagraha is widely used by victims of injustice and violence in their struggle for human rights and dignity. India has also produced Mother Teresa and Kailash Satyarthi, who have received the Nobel Prize for Peace for their selfless work for the poor and bonded child labourers in India. They are models for all those engaged in peace-building. Let us hope that all people of goodwill redouble their efforts to work for peace and social harmony among the diverse communities in India and the world. Let us also hope that the many conflicts and wars that are taking place in the world today may be amicably resolved through dialogue, diplomacy, effective conflict resolution mechanisms and reconciliation between conflicting communities so that peace and prosperity prevail among all nations. □

Denzil Fernandes

THE TEMPLATE OF A PEACE ACTIVIST, ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU

Alwyn D'Souza

The world is poorer today with the passing away of a well-known peace activist, anti-apartheid activist, human rights activist and a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who breathed his last on December 29, 2022. Having read about him and being influenced by him, I find that his life and work offer us a template for peace activism in today's world. In my opinion this template can be structured with five essential elements that Archbishop Desmond Tutu lived and practiced in his life while he worked for the advancement of peace, justice and reconciliation.

1. A Spiritual-centric rather than a Religion-centric Outlook:

Archbishop Desmond Tutu went beyond the confines of his religion. While it's true that he drew great inspiration from his religion, Christianity, he didn't condemn, criticise and exclude people because they belonged to and practiced a different religion. Instead, he sought to reach out and include people of all faiths. He found a good friend in Dalai Lama, a Buddhist leader, and together they fostered peace and joyful living. This friendship between two religious leaders inspired millions to forge such relationships. Today, when there are a lot of tensions caused by what may be called as a 'fundamentalist allegiance to one's religion', Archbishop Desmond Tutu offers us lessons on appreciating and focussing on the goodness and the good values of other religions and thus exhibiting an inclusive mindset and an outlook.

2. Healing and Building Bridges:

He said 'one cannot change what has happened, but one can seek to forgive and reconcile'. All his life he tried to promote unity and forgiveness. He believed that 'for our nation to heal and become a

more humane place, we need to embrace our enemies as well as our friends'. He tried to unite the rival black factions and he also united religious leaders around human values. His unwavering hope in humanity and non-violence facilitated healing of racial wounds and the building of bridges of peace and reconciliation among hostile groups and communities. He is credited to have coined and popularized the phrase 'rainbow nation' (a metaphor for post-apartheid South Africa) to promote peace and harmony among all the people of South Africa. His capacities to 'heal and build bridges' were extended even to promoting gender-sensitive and gender inclusive initiatives, including his support for the rights of LGBTQ+ community.

3. Credible and Compassionate Leadership:

He was an exemplary, credible, courageous and a compassionate religious leader. He believed in and promoted non-violence as the Chairperson of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The inspiration behind his credible and compassionate leadership is undoubtedly the 'ubuntu ethic'. He defined 'ubuntu' as referring to 'gentleness, compassion, hospitality, openness to others, vulnerability, availability to others and knowledge that you are bound up with them in the bundle of life'. When we are witnessing a great dearth of credible and compassionate leaders, the example of Archbishop Desmond Tutu stands in complete contrast.

4. Speaking Truth to Power:

He said 'if you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. During his life time he criticized and condemned many political leaders for their crimes and atrocities against humanity which included

criticism of Israel's treatment of Palestinians, his opposition to the Iraqi war and criticism of the South African Presidents, Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma for their wrongdoings. He even criticized the church leaders in order to defend the LGBTQ+ rights. Therefore, he spared none when it was a matter of defending the rights of the weak and oppressed.

5. Hope and Optimism: It was this hope and optimism that helped Archbishop Desmond Tutu to continue his fight against apartheid for very long years. He called himself a 'prisoner of hope' and believed that 'hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness'. It's no doubt that the life of a peace activist is riddled with challenges and setbacks. Archbishop Desmond Tutu offers us an example to be hopeful and optimistic and not to give up when faced with many hostile and unfavourable situations. He stood firm with a hope that change, though slow, would surely show up.

Embracing and promoting this 'peace template' of Archbishop Desmond Tutu is not an easy task. At the same time, living and promoting this 'peace template' is sure to pave the way for peaceful, joyful and humane living of all, cutting across all divisions like race, caste, religion, gender, language and ethnicity. With growing conflicts and cries for war in different parts of the world, we need many people to arrest this war-tide. This requires that many more people emerge as peace activists and commit themselves to align and sync with this 'peace template' of Archbishop Desmond Tutu and so carry forward the life and legacy of one of the greatest peace activists of the modern world. □

PEACE BUILDING IN THE MIDST OF CONFLICT

Bokali Kasho

Waking up to the news of a war in the early hours of February 24th, 2022 was not what anyone would have anticipated while they were going off to sleep the previous night. The news of Ukraine being invaded by Russia, setting off the worst conflict in Europe after the Second World War shocked the entire world.

While looking back at a month or two of fighting that has killed hundreds of civilians including dozens of children and millions of people being displaced, what is even more scary is that the war is still on, with the invasion, the stinging sanctions and nuclear threats still giving us chills. It almost seems that we shouldn't be sleeping peacefully or staying still. We are to be awake and stay alert for, if this continues, a third world war is likely to happen.

Wars often have cultural dimensions related to ethnicity or religion, but there is invariably underlying political, social, and economic inequalities too which causes conflict between the groups, communities, nations, and predispose to war. Now what is more shocking is how the world leaders are playing their own cards of politics, putting the lives of their citizens in danger. While they are supposed to be protecting the citizens, they are busy with their own game of rising to power, putting the lives of the people at risk. This drive or the need to be superior over the other is what escalates the fighting and war among the nations.

Over the past decade, the number of violent political conflicts worldwide has increased dramatically. From a political perspective, inclusive government is not simply a matter of democracy. Conflict is greatest in semi-democracies or governments in transition and least among

established democracies and authoritarian regimes. From early colonialism to modern capitalism, one nation's economic growth has often been at the detriment of other nations, where they have aggressively acquired assets, created trade routes, or leveraged economic scale to source products, assets, and services artificially or cheaply. These processes have created great wealth and development in some nations, but have exacerbated poverty and economic inequality in many nations, creating a great deal of tension and potential for conflict. Another factor is technology, which has been a huge enabler for global development, but it has also made injustices and inequalities more visible to external and internal participants in any situation. In the face of such a fractured world, it is tempting to become distraught and believe that nothing can be done except perhaps resorting to military options.

Religion, governance, and politics are the issues that have historically caused many of the world's most significant conflicts, and continue to do so, as often these issues are the most fundamental in the structure of a society.

The quickly changing course of the war and the uncertainty about the future have disappointed the people even more as the ripples of the war in one part of the world affects the entire world impacting trade, oil prices and long-standing diplomatic ties. In conflict-ridden regions, among the affected poor, marginalized communities, and minorities, women and children are the ones who suffer the most.

We talk about the dynamics of conflict and crisis situations, and how it is important to build peace but when it comes to power, the

talk of peace goes in vain. That is why it is very important to have a good leader, a leader who will truly and bravely vouch for peace and security of its people. Along with that economic and social policies that are needed to systematically reduce horizontal inequalities.

Good governance goes beyond better government. It is healthy interaction between government, business and civil society, and inclusivity of all stakeholders that will make for good governance.

They say we live in one of the most peaceful periods of human history but how peaceful is it when there are missiles and bombs flying over our head waiting to explode and engulf the entire humanity. The rich and the privileged can somehow save themselves but how do the poor and less privileged people protect themselves.

Hence, there is a need for leaders to have the wisdom and heart to act upon it if we are to truly achieve peace. There is a need for the advancement of peace and reconciliation. The majority should not remain bystanders when mayhem looms. They need to overcome their obsession with failure and invest in the future because reconciliation is the starting point and it should commence today for peace to prevail. Only resilience towards the reconciliation process in the midst of conflict has a chance of developing into a common future for all nations. Therefore, the peace and reconciliation attempts at the personal, communal, national and international levels should be made. And for that our leaders require courage and resilience in the face of agony and oppression. Our leaders need to be "peacemakers" in the midst of the conflict. □

WOMEN IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACE KEEPING PROCESSES: SHIFTING THE POWER

Archana Sinha

There exists divergence based on intersections of identities, like class, caste, religion and ethnicity, that have played a crucial role in the sustainment of conflict and the subsequent success or failure of democratic interventions. Women are the strength of our social system and culture. They hold the ability to transform society into an enviable path. Women are significant players in the process of change and development. This reflection highlights a variety of ways that women experience conflict and engage in peace building, and presents new insights and provides important lessons for international and national levels of peace promotion. It will also help in raising awareness about strategies and practices to augment their participation in peace building. Despite the radical work women do for justice, peace, and security, they continue to be underrepresented in formal peace processes. To this end, it explores ways in which peace building and democratization processes can be supported and reinforced to advance their capacity to generate greater participation and insertion of marginalized groups. Peace-keeping was brought to the global consciousness by former UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali in his *An Agenda for Peace* (1992). It also identifies constraints to and opportunities for the inclusion of women from marginalized communities in peace building initiatives; scan the consequences of women's inclusion and exclusion for democratic practice and development; and suggest ways for the increased inclusion of women from marginalized communities in peace and

democracy, thereby, constructing proposals and initiatives. Limiting women's participation in peace building processes denies them the opportunity to define and address their own concerns and needs and erasing their experience and knowledge of the conflict in question from the public agenda. Evidences suggest that women are not just submissive victims in conflict, that their activities impact the state of security in their societies, and as catalysts for peace, women have built inclusive alliances across conflict lines. Women from marginalized communities are principally vulnerable to human rights violations and suffer the maximum abuse and discrimination both within and outside their communities. As a result, women need to be included in discussions on conflict and reform processes for them to be effective.

Gendered patterns cause women to suffer disproportionately from insecurity and violence in ways that are specific to women as a group. Women are integral to the peace building process and the involvement of civil society organisations, including women's groups. Therefore, women are stakeholders in peace building and conflict resolution because they are impacted by, and have an impact on violence in very specific and gendered ways. There is a common consensus in the literature on gender and conflict that conflict has the potential to transform gender relations and may create opportunities for women to challenge restrictive gender roles and assume leadership place.

Women's participation in conflict prevention and peace keeping is repressed by

patriarchy, inequalities, militarised masculinities and discriminatory power structures. Class, as articulated through instances of economic insecurity and social injustice, has also been instrumental in informing women's positions. Women are crucial partners in economic recovery, social cohesion, and political legitimacy, and women's participation in an intervention process can help ensure that more and varied members of the community become engaged in peacemaking. Hence, women from marginalized communities have been shown to occupy roles as integral actors in conflict resolution and peace building, but their perspectives on how to achieve and practice democracy are marginalized, as they are rarely included in peace negotiations and public-policy formation processes. Peace efforts still do not include enough women.

To understand, recognize and address gendered drivers of conflict, women from marginalized communities need to be included in setting the public agenda, including debate for resolutions and settlements. So is true in contexts where women are able to contribute more openly in community life. However, political will is needed for women to be integrated into formal peace building and peace keeping and longer-term democratic processes. Human rights abuse of women can result in state and non-state actors to engage in conflict. Thus, the denial of human rights leads to marginalization, insecurity and conflict. Conflicts can only be resolved through an inclusive process, and this means including women in more central roles to engage and bring-in multiple

stakeholders. Finally, it is important to remember that women entering peace building and democratic institutions can be just as complicit as men in upholding existing discriminatory power structures, including women's peace networks, community conflict-resolution

mechanisms and civil society initiatives. This reflection analyses the role of women in maintaining peace and prosperity of nations that would be determined by their willingness to influence the direction of the world and how well women can utilize their natural

abilities as peace makers, harmony-seekers, nurturers and mediators to turn the tide against war and conflict. Therefore, women need to take part in every stage of the peace process, not only at the key decision-making level but generally as key players and supporters. □

THIRD HASHIYE KI AAWAZ KATHA SAMMAN 2020



Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, organized a virtual programme to give away the Third 'Hashiye Ki Awaz Katha-Samman 2020' on January 11, 2022. Among the 12 stories published in Hashiye ki Awaz in 2020, the stories of Late Surajpal Chauhan, Dr. Puran Singh, Bipin Bihari, Anwar Suhail, Dr. Kusum Viyogi and Neerja Hemendra were rated as the good stories for the honour. There were three jury members, namely- Mohandas Naimishrai, Dr. Kusum Madhuri Toppo, and Professor Pramod Meena to select the good stories.

While sharing his experience,

Jury member Dr. Pramod Meena said that after reading the stories, one feels that the incidents mentioned in the stories are taking place around us. The stories show atrocities against Dalits, Adivasis, women and minorities which is a reality of our society. Another jury member, Dr. Kusum Madhuri Toppo said that she was proud to be a member of the jury to select the stories. This magazine vigorously raises the rights of Dalits, Adivasis, and Minorities and provides them a platform. Nowadays, the writers from the deprived section cannot get their articles published in the

so-called upper caste magazines. All the awardees were also given the chance to express their opinion on this occasion. The welcome address was delivered by Dr. Vincent Ekka, Editor, Hashiye Ki Awaz and the Katha Samman was announced by Dr. Thomas Perumalil, Research Director of Indian Social Institute. The program was conducted by Sayed Parvez, Assistant Editor, and Raj Valmiki, Writer and Social Worker (Safai Karamchari Andolan). A vote of thanks was proposed by Arun Oraon, Assistant Editor, Hashiye Ki Awaz. □

Sayed Parvez & Arun Oraon

"The quality of our lives depends not on whether or not we have conflicts, but on how we respond to them" -Thomas Crum

NATIONAL SHARING AND LEARNING WORKSHOP FOR PEACE TRAINERS OF "SHANTI SADBHAVNA MANCH"



'Shanti Sadbhavna Manch' is a platform which provides an opportunity for a peace and harmony movement of students and community members belonging to marginalized and deprived communities. It is a small step taken by the Indian Social Institute to create an awareness of peaceful coexistence among the most vulnerable, marginalized and deprived societies so that there will be respect for human values irrespective of caste and creed and progress in life together. This peace initiative is carried on in seven states of central India namely Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. There is a State coordinator and five zonal peace trainers in each state. Each zonal

peace trainer takes care of eight peace clubs 4 in schools and 4 in villages. There are 18 to 20 members in each peace club. Main activities of the peace club members are the regular monthly meetings, Bal Mahotsav and cultural diversity celebrations.

The Indian Social Institute organizes an annual sharing sessions for the state coordinators and zonal peace trainers at the center. This year too we organized a two days national workshop on 15th and 16th February 2022 for peace trainers to learn from each other's experiences. 36 peace trainers from seven states participated in the workshop. Most of the sessions were spent on the presentation by each state on the activities which were conducted during last six months

and the impact of the programs. Besides, sessions were also allotted for Fundamental Duties mentioned in the Constitution and Socialization process based on culture. The peace trainers expressed the challenges faced during last two years due to COVID-19 pandemic. The regular peace activities were suspended during the COVID-19 lockdown. Peace trainers were engaged in relief work and taking care of the quarantine centers. Student peace club members were affected adversely. Almost two years schools were closed and the students in rural areas had no facility for online classes. Peace trainers organized seminars and counselling sessions for the students. It was a great help for them during lock down. □

Pascal Tirkey

WEBINAR ON "ECONOMIC INEQUALITY: IMPACT ON SOCIAL JUSTICE"



Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society (CISRS) & Indian Social Institute (ISI), New Delhi

WORLD DAY OF
SOCIAL JUSTICE

WEBINAR ON

Economic Inequality: Impact on Social Justice



Speaker:

Amitabh Behar
(Chief Executive Officer, Oxfam India)

Saturday,
19th February 2022
6.00pm-7.30pm



Meeting ID: **815 2765 1265**
Passcode: **202199**

On the occasion of the World Day of Social Justice, Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society (CISRS) and Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, organized a webinar on "Economic Inequality: Impact on Social Justice" on 19th February, 2022. The programme began with a welcome address by Rev. Dr. Y.T. Vinayraj, Director of CISRS. The speaker on the occasion was Mr. Amitabh Behar, Chief Executive Officer of Oxfam India. Referring to the recently released Oxfam report "Inequality Kills", he pointed out that during the COVID-19 pandemic the wealth of Indian billionaires has doubled even as 84% of the population experienced a decline in income and 16 crore people in India fell below the poverty line. He advocated for tax reform that focused on direct taxation and increasing taxes on the rich. He proposed greater investment in health, education and social security as well as ensuring minimum living wages to all households. The session was moderated by Dr. Denzil Fernandes, Executive Director of ISI, Delhi, and the entire programme was compered by Dr. Archana Sinha, Assistant Research Director, ISI, Delhi. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Rev. Arvind Peter, Program Coordinator, CISRS. □

Denzil Fernandes

Social Justice is the surest guarantor of peace in the world.

-Guy Ryder

THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2022



The International Women's Day is celebrated to honour the achievements of women in society. The International Women's Day was celebrated in the Institute on 8th March 2022 with great enthusiasm. All the departments of the Institute attended the program including JRS, CDO-JCI, SJES and MAIN. The theme of the programme was "Gender Equality today for a Sustainable Tomorrow". The programme started with the welcome speech by Ms. Satya Srinivasan. The Inaugural speech was given by the Executive

Director of the Institute Dr. Denzil Fernandes.

Lighting of the lamp ceremony done by Dr. Denzil Fernandes, Dr. Thomas Perumalil, Ms. Rufina Lawrence, Ms. Grace Dungdung, Dr. Archana Sinha. Dr. Thomas Perumalil shared the significance of the day and informed the gathering about the history behind the celebrating The International Women's Day. Dr. Lancy Lobo, Dr. Alwyn D'Souza and Fr Stephen Raj, also shared their views on this special occasion. Dr Tony Dias spoke about the

occasion with humorous anecdotes, which created the ambience of the laughter. Dr Vincent Ekka recited a lovely poem with names of every female staff working in the Institute, which was composed by himself for the occasion. Adv. Bokali, from CHRL, Ms. Shahgul from JRS, Ms. Tanvi from CDO and Ms. Suman from SJES shared their life experiences of being women in society and in their own families.

A game of passing the balloon was organized for the all women, who participated in it with full enthusiasm. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Mr. Arun Kumar Oraon followed by refreshments. During the staff interaction organized on 10th March 2022, Mr. Ruben Minj shared the video he prepared on the International Women's Day celebration. □

Rufina Lawrence

BOOK POST

SUBALTERNs

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