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Editorial

The COVID-19 pandemic took the world by surprise and has affected almost all countries in the world, including India. Millions of people across the globe have been infected and lakhs of people have died. In addition, various responses by Governments, including lockdowns, have led to immense suffering for marginalised sections of society in all countries. However, this global pandemic has been redefining governance and the lifestyle of people and has taught us many lessons which we need to take into account in the post COVID-19 world. The first lesson is that each one of us needs to take our personal health and hygiene seriously. Washing hands regularly, using sanitizers on hands and surfaces, wearing masks, avoiding coughing, and sneezing in public have become our daily routine. Spitting in public is now a punishable offence. Eating healthy food rich in vitamins and minerals, such as fresh fruits and vegetables is now preferred over junk food. Boosting one's immunity with greater intake of Vitamin C, such as lime or adding garlic, ginger or turmeric to foods and drinks has become part of our daily diet rather than alcoholic or fizzy drinks. Many people have become more health conscious by drinking water more often and engaging in regular walks and exercise. Secondly, our work life has changed completely. We have learnt that we can do a lot of work from home rather than coming to

LESSONS FROM A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

office as it saves on travel time. By avoiding non-essential travel we not only save fuel, time and money but we also help in reducing pollution in our towns and cities. We have learnt to work using virtual means by having online meetings rather than physical meetings. We have also learnt that we can conduct a lot more webinars and online workshops, trainings and other programmes at little cost rather than conducting more expensive physical seminars and conferences. Thirdly, our social life has changed as we restrict visiting friends and family and maintain at least six feet distance from people we encounter as we venture outdoors. We have also learnt that we can deepen our spirituality by praying at home or in families. With most houses of worship closed, people have discovered practicing their faith in families and communities rather than crowding in temples, mosques, churches and other places of worship. This pandemic has also taught us that we can celebrate our festivals, marriages, and other social occasions less extravagantly and with less people. Fourthly, this pandemic has questioned the pedagogy of teaching in our education system and has taught us that ultimately education should be child centered and children must learn by themselves how to acquire information, knowledge and the skills they need for their personal and intellectual growth. It has forced schools and colleges

to introduce new ways of online teaching methods. Since most examinations have had to be cancelled, the pandemic has also forced educational institutions to re-look the examination system as criteria to evaluate the capacities of children. Fifthly, this pandemic has reasserted the power of nature over the power of human beings. In the last few years, scientists had been warning people of impending disasters if we are unable to address the issue of climate change, pollution and the destruction of the environment. Some Governments were mindful of these concerns but others, in their pursuit of wealth and economic growth, continued on the path of environmental destruction. This pandemic reinforced the need for global solidarity to protect the environment. A post COVID-19 world needs to focus on sustainable development and an ecologically friendly lifestyle. Finally, the pandemic exposed the poor governance of countries and international institutions. It forced governments to re-orient their economic priorities to focus on public healthcare, food security, employment generation, welfare of migrant workers, rural development, small and medium enterprises, and financial assistance to vulnerable populations. Let us hope that the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic will lead to a better and sustainable future for the whole of humanity. □

Denzil Fernandes

INDIAN LOCKDOWN IS DEADLIER THAN CHINESE CORONA

Ratnesh Katulkar

In a welfare state, it is the duty of the State to look after the safety, security and well-being of her citizens. As an attempt to restrict the spread of COVID-19, a complete lockdown was one such step. This action has been implemented in many nations. However, what is unique to India was its sudden declaration. On 19th March, we were told by our Prime Minister that on 22nd March there would be a self-declared curfew—actually in most of the states it was strictly enforced by the police. The PM urged people to stay at home for 14 hours between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. In this appeal, there was no mention of ‘social distancing’ neither there was any mention of any rules and regulations after the curfew. A large section of the common public viewed this decision as a frontal attack to break the chain of Corona infection. As a result, the moment the self-curfew got over, the people began to celebrate the event. The youth, men and women and kids found an opportunity to showcase their talents by gathering in common places. It was quite a natural outburst of their emotion as they found victory in their Prime Minister’s strategy to fight with corona. The Janata Curfew proved to be a complete failure. Instead of ensuring physical distancing between people, it gave an opportunity to get in touch with a wide range of people gathered in celebration and thus provided an ample opportunity for the virus to spread among the masses. Not surprisingly, the cities of Indore and Vadodara which celebrated the festival of Janata curfew most lately became the worst victims of corona infection.

The second and most

drastic action of the government was the sudden imposition of nationwide lockdown. The people were given an ultimatum of just four hours to fix their residence. The labourers, workers, officials, students, who for the sake of their job or education were temporarily settled in other cities and states, suddenly found themselves in a sort of an open jail as trains and buses were completely shut down from the next day onwards. The market, factories, offices and schools and all other places were completely closed. It was the worst attack on daily wage earners and small entrepreneurs. They lost their entire source of livelihood. The Dalits, Adivasis, Muslims were the worst sufferers of this sudden lockdown. The construction industry which consists of a labour force of 28.7% Dalits and 23.7% Adivasis was shut down. The Dalits, who work as cobblers on the road side and engaged in other petty businesses, have become jobless. The Muslims, who were mostly engaged in small entrepreneurship and skilled work, were all deprived of their livelihood. The barbers mostly from the backward castes of Hindus and Muslims also lost their earnings. It is true that the lockdown completely restricted the economic activities of a nation, but it is equally true that only big business players and entrepreneurs, government officials and professionals in private sectors had savings and surplus to enjoy the lockdown. There is no slightest doubt that the poorer sections of the society were the worst victims of the lockdown. The complete halt on livelihood activities, which led them to starvation and the shutdown of

railway and bus services, forced the victims to choose to walk for thousands of kilometers to reach their homes where at least there is a guarantee of shelter and to some extent food.

It is a minimum expectation in any welfare state to provide its citizens a decent mode of travel free of cost at a time of tragedy. India at the time of VP Singh witnessed how poor Indian laborers in Kuwait were airlifted to India by the state. But the present regime is so insensitive that the poor migrant labourers were left to fend for themselves. The worst thing is that when a prominent Congress leader sponsored buses for the migrant labourers, the state government of Uttar Pradesh went on to the extent of opposing the entry of these buses. The special trains which came into the scene after the passage of many days were also not provided free of cost until the Supreme Court intervened.

While walking towards their home districts the labourers became victims of police brutality. It was just a police raj. In Chhindwara district, a poor youth was beaten to death by police but this doesn’t become news in mainstream media. A lawyer in Betul, who happened to be a Hindu, was beaten mercilessly by police on account of his beard which made them believe that he is a Muslim. We have seen how labourers were being run over by trains and some of them lost their lives in road accidents. There is no account of deaths due to hunger and starvation. The poor easily falls into a debt trap. We do not have adequate data to show how many lives were lost due to the lockdown but it is sure that it proved deadlier than the corona pandemic. □

WORKING FROM HOME DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND WORK LIFE HARMONY

Archana Sinha

The world is facing a major crisis owing to the sudden outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Most countries have been observing lockdowns, stay at home strategies and social distancing to avoid the spread of the virus. As the roads and streets remain deserted, chirping birds are heard throughout and trees glow in full glory. The complete lockdown had noticeably impacted upon the world outside in positive ways. But what was the impact of this lockdown on those directed to work from their own home! In topical existences, there has been increasing focus on the question of how to balance work and life commitments in both academic and social debates. Working from home has been one initiative that has been promoted as an approach of humanizing the work-life balance. This has on the one hand helped control the spread of the virus to only limited spaces; on the other hand, there are many vulnerable groups who have been suffering and are affected adversely by the situation.

Experience of working from home helped me to explore different aspects of everyday life with regard to time and space. This has not been an easy way. Though I was at home during Covid-19 pandemic and the entire lockdown and unlock phase till date, I considered myself on duty in a Work from Home mode. This implies that I dedicated adequate time for Institute related tasks or assignments, the details of which were submitted to the Institute in the form of monthly reports or daily reports. My days of working

from home were actually more productive since I felt like I had something to prove to myself that I can stay self-disciplined without much supervision. I took the advantage of participating in a few free online E-Certificate courses from recognized institutions for my skill upgradation, capacity building, and for paper presentations in International Webinars. I was also able to participate in an online training that was undertaken on social work interventions during the Covid-19 pandemic covering psycho-social aspects of the situation and interventions and skills required during such difficult times. I am able to spend quality time with family and at home even while working. I expanded my range of cooking skills, care work, and home management skills as well. I learnt that irrespective of age, caste, religion, or gender, everyone can find a tempo to help them combine work with their other responsibilities, commitments or aspirations, and thus the work life balance included fine tuning working patterns in manners which allow people to achieve this tempo. One of the ways in which it is suggested that harmony between work and other life commitments might be accomplished is by working from home. However, the fact is that we are working from home due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We are getting used to the new normal slowly but gradually. Most of the things related to work are going on well. We are able to participate in meetings online with the help of some online tools and applications. So this lockdown,

in terms of work from home did not impact me any differently. To be honest, work from home isn't easy, yet work from home was very productive for me as personally I saw it as an opportunity. Yet in my opinion, work and economy cannot be at a standstill, and things will definitely get better. We are all corona warriors in our own ways. All in all, work from home is beneficial and yet there is a slow realization that it's better to get back to the office, at least for a few days, the reason being that we don't have a clear 'work mode' and 'home mode' and we end up working all day.

In the wake of the global pandemic, work from home is glorified as the future of work. Such times call for interventions and proactive actions on the part of those who are committed to work for communities and society at large considering the given situation which has created an upheaval in the lives of many people. In conclusion, the current emphasis on work life harmony should be welcome for those institutions which take it seriously. Creating a balance between work and home life is unquestionably a goal worth pursuing. However, if one needs to completely apprehend the effects of working from home, more research is needed from the perspective of those who work from home. During the outbreak of the pandemic, staying and working from home is the only way to get work done as it is better to be safe than sorry. It is going to take a long time before I am able to accept this new normal as a way of my life. □

SITUATION OF THE POOR AMIDST COVID-19 CRISIS

Charu Bhargav

Every New Year brings new hopes, new opportunities and anticipation of a better future. Who could have thought that to even survive through this year we will have to be locked down and be restricted to our homes? Who could have thought many of us will be out of work for more than 2 months? Who could have thought an invisible micro-organism can create such devastation all over the world?

India had initially announced a 21 day lockdown starting from 25th March to contain the spread of COVID-19 pandemic in the country. According to the World Bank, India had also been witnessing a pre-pandemic slowdown and the current pandemic has "magnified pre-existing risks to India's economic outlook". Unemployment rose from 6.7% on 15 March to 26% on 19 April and then back down to pre-lockdown levels by mid-June. During the lockdown, an estimated 14 crore people lost employment while salaries were cut for many others. More than 45% of households across the nation have reported an income drop as compared to the previous year.

This also meant that its large work force could not access labour markets. Even though India has fared badly in terms of generating "good jobs", for a vast majority of its workforce, its informal markets have kept a large section of workers at low income levels. Working in the informal sector has also limited collective "class action" in favour of a common set of demands, despite having to live with inequality in almost every aspect of life, including the ability to live through illnesses.

A large number of workers lead a hand-to-mouth existence in the country, and will find it very difficult to even get two square meals a day if their daily work is disrupted. While India does have a food security program, which is expected to cover two-thirds of the population, making the entitlements portable is still a work in progress. This means that

short-term migrant workers are not very likely to have access to its benefits. Also, for a migrant worker living outside his home, food is not the only necessary expense. Managing things such as rent payments is an equally big issue in the absence of a regular flow of work. Millions of workers must be having a very difficult time at this moment. Reports of thousands of workers walking on foot to their homes, hundreds and even thousands of kilometers away, confirm this.

It can always be argued that the current economic pain due to the lockdown is not unjustified. After all, if the pandemic starts infecting people at a widespread rate in a country like India, the consequences can be disastrous. However, it is also true that there is a fundamental asymmetry in this entire trade off. While the benefits of a lockdown preventing the infection from spreading would equally accrue to everyone, the costs will be disproportionately higher for the poor, who, unlike the better off, have neither the luxury of working from home nor enough of a savings pool to exhaust while not earning. In this case, it could even be said that the disease has been brought home by the rich, as it originated in a foreign country, and the poor had absolutely no role to play in its spread.

It also needs to be reiterated that even under normal circumstances, the poor are actually more vulnerable to deaths from being ill, as they can neither avail treatment nor afford adequate diet to recover from their ailments. Research based on the India Human Development Survey (IHDS) data shows that the poorest Indians are almost twice as likely to die compared to the richest even when they are healthy. This triples when an illness is involved. There is another way to look at these statistics. For a person belonging to the poorest 20% of the population, the chances of dying increase by a multiple of 1.9 if they are ill, whereas

this increases only 1.2 times when the person belongs to the richest 20% of the population.

Sadly, the evidence so far suggests that the current government does not have the capacity to think through the details of planning and execution. This is turning out to be another demonetization. While there is little clarity on when the current crisis will end, and whether or not we will see further waves of the outbreak, such fears will clearly remain. It is not very difficult to argue that a change in policy regime could actually go very far in insulating the poor from the terribly high economic costs of the economic disturbances due to such outbreaks in the future. Examples of these could be provisions for increased income/food transfers in such emergencies, significantly augmenting public health infrastructure; both in terms of quantity and quality to protect the poor during such crises, and even ensuring some sort of payment to daily wage workers during other illnesses that prevent them from working.

If a political party were to push for such changes, it could actually be pretty successful in mobilising a large section of the poor behind these demands. While the poor have little say in shaping India's intellectual or public discourse, they do have a significant role in deciding political outcomes.

Whether or not this happens will depend on how political parties, both in power and in the opposition, both national and regional, take up these issues with a clearly defined set of demands and mass outreach. We will see a lot of politicking over governments' handling of the current crisis both in India and abroad. However, it remains to be seen whether political parties in India decide to use the current pandemic to demand a redrawing of political alignments in favour of the poor or not. □

MY EXPERIENCES DURING LOCKDOWN DUE TO COVID 19

The nationwide lockdown was announced by our Prime Minister on 24th March 2020. The lockdown restricted people from stepping out of homes. All transport services, air, rail, and road, were suspended except transportation of essential goods, emergency, fire and police services. Educational institutions, industrial establishments, and hospitality services were also suspended. However food shops, petrol pumps, ATMs, other essentials and their manufacturing were exempted. Everyday news flashed about the number of infected, cured and dead people due to Coronavirus pandemic. More than death, the 'Fear of Death' gripped the people. In this situation, the worst hit were stranded laborers and daily wage workers. Our team of priests, youth, and professionals could reach out to some of these people and their families. The collaboration of several NGOs, and individuals made the campaign 'Help during COVID-19' fruitful. Here are few experiences that are shared below:

Delhi Climate

While traveling to every nook and corner of Delhi our team crossed the Yamuna bridge several times. I was surprised to notice that the river Yamuna was clean. Earlier whenever I had crossed the Yamuna bridge I could only see black water due to factory waste and other effluents. In the same manner the air quality of Delhi had improved drastically. Earlier the skies looked hazy with smoke and dust due to pollution but during the lockdown the sky was clear blue. The roads were empty and clean and stray dogs and cattle occupied it.

Poverty & Helplessness in Sadar Bazar

Our team went to Sadar Bazar to distribute rations to five families a day before it was declared as a



containment zone. We had asked one member of each family to come at a meeting point decided earlier. No sooner we got out of our vehicle to give them ration, people around living in the slums surrounded us and we were trapped. They started to push, abuse, and fight to get a packet of ration. Some of them even got very close to our lady volunteer which was embarrassing and disturbing. We decided to move quickly from that area but the crowd stood in front of our vehicle. We were terrified and helpless, because they were hitting the vehicle in order to get the ration. I got out of the vehicle and asked them to come behind it. As soon as the crowd stood behind the vehicle to form a line, I quickly got inside it and asked the driver to get us out from that area. We barely escaped from a major mishappening that day. But the emotional part of our experience was that while we were going away in speed from that area, a young boy maybe fourteen or fifteen years old was running behind our vehicle wiping his tears and signaling us to stop. Our heart went out to him and we immediately stopped and gave him a packet of ration. I felt that he needed ration so desperately that he could not stop following us.

Power struggle in Delhi Village

One of the villages we visited

in Delhi had a good number of tribals. Most of them are daily wage workers or domestic helpers. Widows could also be seen in many houses. Through a friend we received the list of the families who needed rations and other essential items. We contacted two focal persons and under their coordination we could manage to distribute the rations in that area. However I could see a little rift and tension between the two focal persons. Each wanted to get hold of the ration and distribute it according to their convenience and place. Therefore, we decided to divide the number of ration packets and gave each focal person their respective quota to distribute. I realized that it was important for them to get hold of the ration because doing so gave them a little edge and respect to project themselves as a charitable person and a leader in the society.

Helplessness of Medical store workers and Women

It often got late in the evening after finishing off with the distribution of rations. While returning home I could see women and sometimes young girls and boys working in the medical stores or in essential services walking alone on the road (maybe towards their home). Since there were no public or private transport services they had

to walk miles daily to do their duty. Many of them asked for a lift, but nobody including myself stopped the vehicle because of the spread of Coronavirus. I pondered that those people especially women were undertaking an arduous walk everyday in the night risking their lives and safety in Delhi. At that moment I realized the intensity of helplessness and commitment they had towards their duty.

Politics over COVID-19

While distributing meals in one of the localities in Seelampur area, the local MLA insisted that we put his name and the party’s banner around, to showcase that it was sponsored by the Government of Delhi. But in reality the meals were fully sponsored by the NGOs who supported us. I noticed that in many parts of Delhi, NGOs came forward to help the people and the government came forward to take the credit for it. Corruption was involved in the area where the government supplied cooked food to the people through NGOs. Government meals that were supplied were of poor quality with less nutritional content. A person from a political party was not ready to help the poor unless it reaped him benefits. This was an eye opener for me to understand the politics played over COVID-19 and insensitivity of



our political leaders towards the poor during this time of crisis.

Stranded Workers returning to their Villages

One of the experiences I had was with the stranded workers on Delhi-Noida highway. I came to know that they were coming from Rohtak, Rohini, Ambala, etc. I noticed that there were pregnant ladies who walked with difficulties and had small kids with them. Those kids were carrying luggage too. They were all tired. Our team gave them bread, biscuits, water bottles, fruits etc. We gave the children chocolates and biscuits just to bring their smiles back. Most of them were going to Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, but they were stopped from crossing the borders by the police personnel. At that time they could not go back because they did not have the money to pay rent to the flat owners. Therefore, many tried

to cross the borders by walking through the fields or along the railway tracks or along the river side path. The rest sat at the borders waiting for the government to permit them to cross the borders.

I realized that this pandemic, which brought the whole world to a halt, was manmade. When all the activities were stopped by humans, then the climate and environment started improving. Lockdown, social distancing and face mask taught us cleanliness and discipline. People could be hardly seen spitting on the streets or throwing garbage or waste on the roads. Awareness and consciousness about cleanliness and healthy lifestyle became the immunity mantra to fight COVID-19. The economy was badly hit due to the lock down, therefore, to keep the economy going, the government planned to unlock the nation with standard operating procedures (SOP). But the real question is that are we ready to risk the spread of coronavirus over the growth of the economy? Or are we preparing to live with coronavirus irrespective of the death it causes?

Anabel Benjamin Bara

INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATION ON DISABILITY RIGHTS



One of the major interventions the Institute has made this year in view of future advocacy programmes was the organizing of the International Consultation on the Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It took a year of preparations to bring together people from four countries to deliberate on the human rights of persons with disabilities.

Keeping in line with its vision and mission, the Institute is mandated to raise its voice on behalf of persons with disabilities. The International Consultation was an endeavour

by the Institute towards protection and promotion of the human rights of Persons with Disabilities (hereinafter PwDs). In fact, PwDs got normative recognition as legal person with the enactment of Persons with Disabilities Act 1995. However, this recognition was very subdued as most of the provisions of this legislation empowered the governments and establishments rather than conferring any substantive rights on PwDs and creating rights enabling conditions. As a result, the legislation mostly remained under-implemented. This is the context in which Sr. Tresa Paul of the CHRL suggested to have an international consultation on the human rights of persons with disabilities. The Institute took it up as an important need of the wider society and entrusted the work of organizing it to CHRL. Dr. Sanjay Jain, who is a visually impaired professor from ILS Law College, Pune, extended his full support to us. Thus, after a year-long preparation, we were able to bring together more than 250 participants in the consultation from all the states of the country and that of Nepal, Sri Lanka and England.

Justice Kurian Joseph, retired Supreme Court Judge inaugurated the consultation in the



presence of Justice Anand Mohan Bhatarai from Nepal Supreme Court, Prof. Anna Lawson, a blind professor from Leeds, U.K, Dr. Denzil Fernandes, ED of ISI Delhi, Dr. Anita Ghai from Ambedkar University, Delhi, Dr. Sanjay Jain, ILS, Pune and Dr. Deshpande from Nagpur University. The days that followed saw a passionate appeal by academics from various universities of India and abroad to implement the national and international laws that support the persons with disabilities. There was a musical night by disabled persons on the second day which was appreciated by all. Two of the most important outcomes of the Consultation were the Delhi Disability Declaration and the moot

advisory proceeding presided over by Justice Madan B. Lokur (retired), Supreme Court (SC) of India, Justice Anand Mohan Bhatarai, SC of Nepal, Justice Prabha Sridevan (retired), HC of Chennai, and Anna Lawson, Director, Disability Studies Centre, University of Leeds, UK. In the proceedings, the counsel that argued on behalf of PwDs was Adv. Vrinda Grover, and on behalf of the state were Adv. Meenakshi Arora and Adv. Jain Dehadrai with Adv. S.K. Rungta as the amicus curiae. Thus the Institute could bring out the problems of the disabled persons into the fore through this international consultation. □

Joy Karayampuram

WORKSHOPS ON DEMOCRACY

The recent move by the Union Government to introduce nationwide Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) 2019, National Register of Citizens (NRC) and National Population Register (NPR) has created furore among human rights activists and some sections of religious minorities. However, very little has been discussed on its impact or the marginalised

communities like Dalits, Tribals, and Transgenders. To address this issue, a research based study material was prepared and shared with the stakeholders. A workshop was called by Dr. Vincent Ekka to create awareness among the community and train community leaders and activists to tackle this challenge. On 29th February and 1st March 2020, a group of a hundred participants, mainly tribal and Dalit officials and activists, took part in the workshop held in the premises of the Institute.

Dr. Ratnesh Katulkar explained the details of NPR, NRC and CAA and shared how it

is detrimental to the democratic system and the manner in which it will harm the Tribals, Dalits and other vulnerable groups. The participants were enlightened about its implications and raised their doubts and concerns. Mr. Prakash Ambedkar, the President of Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi, made a gracious presence for a short duration in this workshop. He also answered the queries of the participants. Dr. Vincent thanked all the participants and distributed a small booklet in the form of questions and answers to all the participants. □

Ratnesh Katulkar



Indian Social Institute took the leading role in hosting the “National Consultation on Religious Minorities: LNOB – India VNR 2020” on 22nd January 2020. By Voluntary National Review (VNR), countries assess the progress made in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the pledge to Leave No One Behind (LNOB) by presenting a snapshot of the country’s status

NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON RELIGIOUS MINORITIES (LNOB – INDIA VNR 2020)

in the implementation of the SDGs and help accelerate the progress through appropriate interventions. The guiding principle to ‘Leave No One Behind’ of the 2030 Agenda comes with challenges to better incorporate disaggregated data in monitoring SDG implementation and address the vulnerable populations. Three new additions for the LNOB – India VNR 2020, were Religious Minorities, Refugees, and People of North-Eastern States. India will present its second VNR on SDGs at the UN- High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) at the United Nations Headquarters in New York in July 2020. NITI Aayog, with support from UN Resident Commissioner’s Office (UN RC) in India, coordinated the preparation of the VNR with multi-stakeholder participation. Unfortunately, NITI Aayog opted out of supporting consultations with Religious Minorities as a

group. Despite their withdrawal, the consultation took place with full participation by members of civil society working for religious minority populations and with the support of UN RC India. The National Consultation was held under the aegis of the UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Renata Dessallien, and involved 62 CSOs working with Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Buddhist, and Parsi communities representing about a dozen states. Ten Regional Consultations were held prior to the National Consultation in Lucknow, Patna, Kolkata, Jaipur, Indore, Nagpur, and Hyderabad, for wider participation. Over 200 experts, activists, and community leaders joined these consultations and diligent efforts were made to involve multiple stakeholders. The report of the consultation has been prepared and submitted to the UN. □

Shabih Anwer

#V4MIGRANTS WEBINARS

The sudden announcement of a National Lockdown on 24th March 2020 put the lives and livelihoods of millions of most vulnerable people, especially migrant workers, at risk. Having lost their jobs and with no income to sustain themselves, many migrant workers rushed to bus stops and railway stations to go home but were stopped by police, who were ordered to seal the borders. This humanitarian crisis compelled an estimated 50 million migrant workers to defy lockdown rules, risking their lives to reach home using innovative means, trekking, walking on roads or railway tracks, cycling, getting on to cargo trucks and any available means of transport. It is estimated that hundreds of migrants have died while undertaking their arduous journey back home. News



of migrants dying of exhaustion, hunger, being run over by trains on the tracks or vehicles on the roads shook the conscience of the Nation. In order to highlight the plight of migrants and engage in advocacy for their rights, the Jesuit Conference of South Asia (JCSA) constituted the Jesuit Resource and Response Hub (JRRH), which immediately launched a #V4Migrants Campaign on social media. As part of the campaign,

three webinars were organised. The first webinar held on 16th May was on “Migrants: The Battered Citizens” with Harsh Mander, Nikhil Dey and Bernard Sami as panelists and Joe Arun SJ as the moderator. The second webinar on 2nd June was on “The Future of Migrants: Back Home or in Cities” with Jean Dreze and Shyam Sundar as panelists and Denzil Fernandes SJ as the moderator. The third webinar was held on 13th June on the topic “Labour Law and Governance Changes in India: A Decent Work Perspective” with Radhicka Kapoor, Ramapriya Gopalakrishnan and Christine Nathan as panelists and Shyam Sundar as the moderator. Over a thousand participants from about 13 countries participated in these webinars, which were very informative and insightful. □

Denzil Fernandes

WORKSHOP ON SOCIAL HARMONY AND DALIT WOMEN

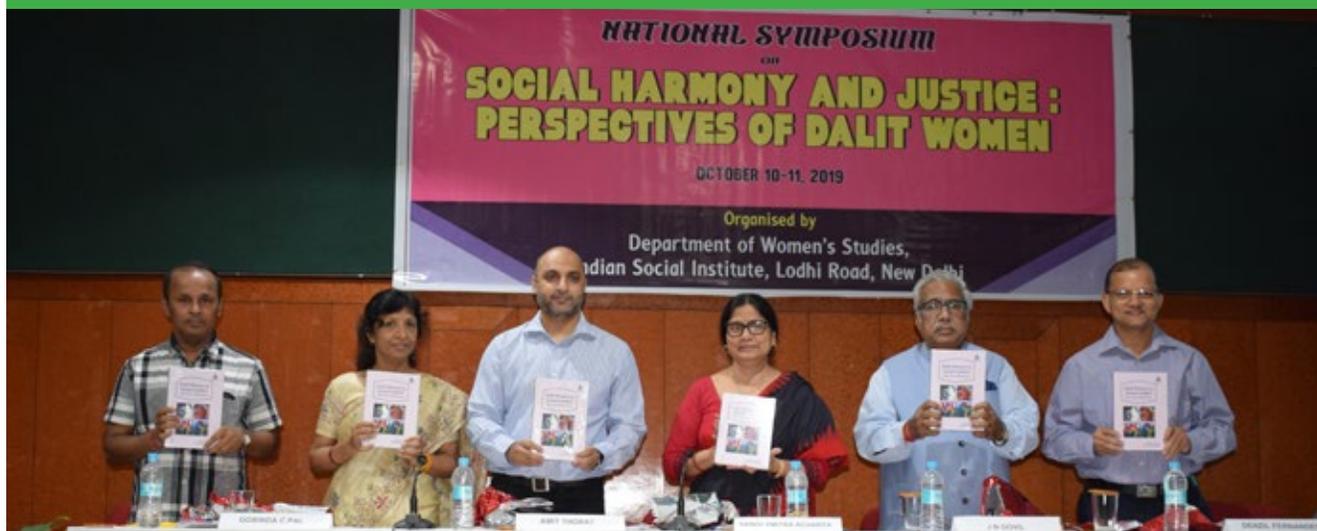
The aim of this one-day workshop, "Social Harmony and Dalit Women in Hisar" was to deliberate on various dimensions of violence against dalit women, from their own perspectives. It was an attempt to highlight the extreme manifestation of social conflict in rural Haryana, including their causes, reactions and the role of stakeholders among others. This workshop was conducted in Hisar (rural Haryana) on November 10, 2019 in partnership with the National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR). Nearly 40 dalit women participated in this workshop. Interactions, group discussions and deliberations were held with dalit women, who are in social conflict and face violence in their everyday life situations in the Haryana village. It dealt with what could be improved in their daily lives. This was possible due



to proper planning and smooth functioning due to networking and linkages with academicians and researchers in the field and formal organisations. The main purpose was to investigate the consequences and factors that lead to Dalit women bearing the brunt of social conflict in rural Haryana by being easy targets of violence and find out the conflict management mechanisms adopted by Dalit women in rural Haryana.

The workshop on social harmony and legal aspects on women was a success. Due to the combined efforts of everyone they came up with positive results from their interaction with dalit women on strategies for social harmony. There is a need to create critical consciousness among the masses and dalit women in particular on violence and social conflict and increase efforts to bring out social transformation. □ Archana Sinha

NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON "SOCIAL HARMONY AND JUSTICE: PERSPECTIVES OF DALIT WOMEN"



A two-day National Symposium on "Social Harmony and Justice: Perspectives of Dalit Women" was organised by Indian

Social Institute, New Delhi, on 10-11 October, 2019. Dr. Denzil Fernandes SJ, Executive Director of ISI-Delhi, warmly welcomed the dignitaries

and delegates of the Symposium with the expectation that it will give hope to build a world founded on social harmony and justice.

Dr. Archana Sinha, the HoD of the Department of Women Studies, explained the dynamics of the Symposium which was being held to coincide with the International Day of the Girl Child. Dr. Amit Thorat from Jawaharlal Nehru University delivered the Inaugural Address, where he stressed on change of mindsets in order to deal with caste and gender discrimination. Dr. Gobinda C. Pal, from the Indian Institute of Dalit Studies (IIDS) spoke on "Intersectional Violence in

Contemporary India: The other side of Social Justice" dealing with a framework to understand caste and gender violence in India. The book "Dalit Women in Social Conflict: The Case of Haryana" by Archana Sinha and Denzil Fernandes, S.J. jointly published by Indian Social Institute and Studium Press, was introduced by Dr. J.N. Govil, Vice President and Managing Director of Studium Press, and released on the occasion. The Symposium included testimonies of Dalit women and

the presentation of 11 papers presented by research scholars, academicians and professors from different Universities and Institutions from various parts of India. The Symposium concluded with the Valedictory Address by Dr. Uma Chakravarty, a renowned feminist historian, who dwelt on the effectiveness of the Prevention of Atrocities (PoA) Acts of 1989 and 2015. At the end of the Symposium, Dr. Furzee Kashyap delivered the vote of thanks. □ **Archana Sinha**

DR. DENZIL FERNANDES SJ CONFERRED DMC HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD 2019

Dr. Denzil Fernandes SJ, the Executive Director of Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, was conferred the Delhi Minorities Commission (DMC) Human Rights Award 2019 for being a "reputed social scientist working for the human, civil and minority rights in the country and for having served as a member of a DMC fact-finding committee". The citation for the award stated: "Your contributions and role in society go a long way to create the secular, egalitarian and inclusive India". He received the award from the DMC Chairman, Dr. Zafarul Islam Khan, at a simple ceremony on 10th June in the premises of the Delhi Minorities Commission in Vikas Bhawan, ITO, Delhi. He is a member of the Christian Advisory Committee of the DMC and Indian Social Institute is one of the NGOs empanelled by DMC to support its activities. During the last three years, he has been actively involved in organising various programmes for the dissemination of Delhi Government schemes for the welfare of minorities in the premises of Indian Social Institute as well as



in schools and different parts of Delhi. On 24th June, 2019, he was appointed by DMC as a member of a fact-finding committee to inquire about the allegations made by Members of Parliament that illegal mosques are mushrooming in Delhi. After about a month-long inquiry, the Committee submitted a report titled "The Legal Status of Religious Spaces in and around West Delhi", which was released at a

Press Conference called by DMC at its premises on 1st August, 2019. He has been active in supporting social activists and human rights activists in their struggle to protect the Constitutional values in our country. Besides, Indian Social Institute has raised human rights issues at the international fora since it enjoys Special Consultative Status at the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

"The reward for work well done is the opportunity to do more." -Jonas Salk

THE FAREWELL PROGRAMME FOR DR. RUDOLF C. HEREDIA, FR. JOY KARAYAMPURAM & FR. JEBAMALAI STANISLAUS



Dr. Rudolf C. Heredia, SJ



Fr. Jebamalai Stanislaus, SJ



Fr. Joy Karayampuram, SJ

“There are no goodbyes for us. Wherever you are, you will always be in my heart” - Mahatma Gandhi

Farewells are never easy, however they are a reality which none of us can avoid. Bidding farewell to our dear colleagues, co-workers, or a boss is a wonderful opportunity for communicating one's appreciation and gratitude to them.

The Staff Forum Committee organised a sendoff programme for our three most respected and treasured reverend Jesuit fathers, Dr. Rudolf C. Heredia, Fr. Joy Karayampuram and Fr. Jebamalai Stanislaus on June 5th, 2020 at 3.00 pm in the ground floor auditorium. The programme started with a welcome speech by the Staff Forum Committee member and thanking Dr. Denzil Fernandes, the Executive Director, Dr. Paul D'Souza, the mentor of the Staff Forum Committee, Fr. Shiju Mathew, the Administrator and the Head of the Finance Department, and the entire staff of the Institute for their continued encouragement

and support throughout the year. Mr. Dilip Kumar thanked the Executive Director for asking the present Staff Forum Committee to continue their services this year too.

The programme began by inviting the distinguished fathers and the Executive Director to the dais. The Executive Director gave a formal address to the gathering and delivered a farewell speech on the commitment and contribution of three outgoing Jesuit Fathers to the Institute and to the society at large. He made two major announcements in the Institute, i.e the appointment of new Superior and Vice President of the Institute and the appointment of the new Head of the CHRL. ED also introduced the new staff who joined the Finance Department.

The highlight of the programme was giving a brief historical background of the three fathers by the staff which included their work, achievements and their contributions to the Institute and society. Then the outgoing Fathers were honoured with stoles by Dr.

Paul D'Souza, the new Superior of ISI Jesuit community. The next segment of the programme was a short video film by Mr. Ruben Minj on the golden moments of these fathers depicting their hard work and contributions to the upliftment of the downtrodden sections of the society. This video presentation had well-wishers wishing the Fathers good luck and expressing gratitude to them. The staff of the Institute also paid their tributes on this occasion. The outgoing fathers also expressed themselves and shared their gratitude and appreciation to the entire staff and to the management.

As a token of appreciation and love for the outgoing fathers, the staff and the management presented a Goodbye greeting card to them. No programme is complete without a soul touching music. The Executive Director presented a musical tribute by singing "May the Good Lord bless and keep you". Finally the programme concluded with a vote of thanks followed by light refreshments. □

Satya Srinivasan

FR. RAVI SAGAR,SJ TAKES OVER AS HEAD OF CHRL



On 8th June, 2020, Fr. Ravi Sagar SJ, assumed charge as Head of the Centre for Human Rights and Law (CHRL). The Institute thanks Fr. Joy Karayampuram SJ for the services he has rendered for the last seven years.

DR. PAUL D'SOUZA,SJ APPOINTED VICE-PRESIDENT OF ISI



The President of the Jesuit Conference of South Asia, Dr. George Pattery SJ, appointed Dr. Paul D'Souza SJ as the new Superior of the ISI Jesuit community and the Vice President of the Governing Board of Indian Social Institute from 1st June, 2020.

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