

Inter Faith Dialogue on Human Rights and Human Responsibilities with focus on Justice and Peace

Rationale: Religion, whether acknowledged or otherwise, remains a constant backdrop for every day experience and consciousness for the most of the people in Asian societies. It still continues to be a dominant organizing principle of social life, giving it unity and coherence. The axiomatic roots of our meaning systems spring from, and are nurtured by a certain religiosity. And religion, whether it is confined within 'civil society' or extends to and influences 'polity', remains the major force that shapes the dominant ethos and thereby also ecological life of the people. It is important to realize that the foundational message of all religions is one of love, peace, equality, non violence & well being amongst the people.

However a worrisome social trend that we witnesses today is the frequency of violence in different manifestations. What is at stake is democracy, secularism, the rule of law, community harmony and cultural pluralism. The consequence of conflicts, violence and war causes unbelievable suffering particularly for women, children. Communities have been reduced to terror, suspicion and insecurity. The livelihood of millions of people has been severely affected and the fabric of the social relationship between people and communities are torn asunder.

The general pattern emerging, in all conflicts is gender based abuse. Sexual violence remains the most sustained common form of violence against women. It has not only endangered women, both directly and indirectly, but also increased their sexual, physical and psychological vulnerability.

The present crisis is a major challenge facing humanities as a whole. To meet the challenges, it is important to recapture the core message of religious founders which is one of integral liberations of person of society, social justice and peace. To create a society based on peace and harmony culture of responsibility and co responsibility are essential. Major religions can aid in responding to the unprecedented multiple crisis and how religions can respond to human aspirations for justice, peace and social harmony.

It is only in a shared culture of responsibility, the human beings can become human and humane. Creativity, spirituality, individual and collective achievements flourish and attain grandeur and glory, only when there is justice and peace. Qualities of compassion, forgiveness, love, sharing and universal solidarity become cherished and sought after attributes only when a community, society or nation is at peace-within and without.

Roll of religious leaders belonging to different faith traditions is to create and share equal opportunities in nurturing a culture of well being of all. And religious leaders in different places have various and varying degree of political power, social status or social influence and therefore morally speaking-they have different degree of responsibilities ranging from nearly denouncing

injustice to mobilizing awareness and action. There is enough in each faith traditions that teaches us to care for each other but not much emphasis is placed to make the responsible principles as a way of life to protect justice, peace and equality.

Objectives of the Dialogue:

To broaden our understanding of the various forms of conflicts, violence and the manifold threats that humanity faces today and to develop perspectives to understand the root cause of violence the region. As well as to explore the wisdom and insights from various traditions, religions, cultural resources, philosophies and ideologies and translating this in a language that will speak to and motivate the larger public toward peace initiatives.

To provide space for citizen's groups and movements to promote linkages and solidarity among various groups involved in peace education, campaign and advocacy against violence perpetuated either in the name of religious, market, ideologies or between States. Initiate dialogue among communities of diverse religious, cultural and ideological traditions on the importance of Justice and Peace.

To build a common platform for justice and peace, and promoting activities and actions of social movements to facilitate convergence of peace activism based on justice and equality and mobilize public opinion ,rallying support for peace agenda through organized campaigns focusing on peoples, struggle for freedom and democracy by social movements, civil society and faith based organizations

How far the core message of major religions, which are one of integral liberation of persons, of society and of world in truth, authenticity, social justice and protection of rights can be the basis for secular spirituality

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Venue: SAHODAYA, KACES Campus, Balmatta, Mangalore, Karnataka, India

Organizers: Forum for Ethics & Responsibilities, Eco Foundation For Sustainable Alternatives (EFSA), Bangalore, Karnataka Christian Education Society (KACES), Mangalore Diocesan Ecumenical Commission (MDEC), Chair in Christianity, Mangalore University, Mangalore, and Mangalore Peace Education Forum (MPEF), Mangalore