

India Peace Centre



Annual Report 2018-2019

Acknowledgement

Peace and harmony are the basic requirements of any nation. The citizens of a country feel safe and secure and can prosper only if a peaceful environment is maintained. While the people of India largely enjoy a peaceful environment, however, the peace and harmony of the country is disrupted many a times owing to various factors. India enjoys unity in diversity. People belonging to different religions, castes and creeds live together in the country. The Constitution of India gives its citizens the freedom of equality and various laws are in force to ensure peace and harmony in the country. However, there have been several instances when peace has been disrupted in the country owing to different reasons, particularly mal-governance. When the divisive forces at work with their communal agenda we at India Peace Centre have always made attempts to build peace with communities that are vulnerable to communal violence and injustice. This Annual Report is a reference to many activities that we did in 2018-2019 in our pursuance of justice and peace.



I am grateful to our partners whose generosity in sharing resources has made it possible for us to stay engaged in the programs and projects reported here. Particularly, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the **National Council of Churches in India, National Council of YMCAs of India, Council for World Mission, EMW in Germany, Frauenkirche Foundation, Germany, Dahlem Dorf Church, Germany, International Voluntary Service, Germany, Global Ministries of UCC in the USA and the Church of Scotland.** At the same time, I would also like to express my gratitude to our Chairperson Rev. Asir Ebenezer and Treasurer Mr. Mani Kumar for their timely support and suggestions. I am equally grateful to all other Board Members of India Peace Centre for their valuable inputs from time to time.

Kasta Dip

Director, India Peace Centre

Christian Leadership for a Culture of Peace in a Multifaith Context

A two-day National Seminar on 'Christian Leadership for a Culture of Peace in the Multi-religious Context of India' was organized by India Peace Centre and Disciples of Christ for Peace (DCP), an ecumenical communion of love for a culture of peace and sustainable development on earth. It was held at Navjivan Renewal Centre, St. Xavier's High School Campus, 4- Raj Niwas Marg, Delhi - 110054, from 13th April to 15th April 2018. This National Seminar brought together 81 peace-loving responsible citizens of India belonging to various Christian Churches in India who are deeply concerned about the growing caste, communal and religious conflicts and violence in the country today and are inspired to work together to build a greater India of communal harmony, peace and sustainable development through interreligious cooperation. There were also few followers of Lord Jesus Christ who do not belong to any of the denominational Churches. Guest 'Observers' from Hindu, Muslim and Buddhist backgrounds were also present. Those who facilitated different sessions include Swami Sachidananda Bharathi, Mr. Kasta Dip, Santaji Lobo, Allan de Noronha, Most Rev. Thomas Thuruthimattam, CST, Bishop of Gorakhpur, Rev. Dr. MD Thomas, Rev. Anand Mathew, Dr. Raju Abraham, Rev. Sunil Sardar and Mr. Augustine Veliath.



An edifying experience of this two-day National Seminar was the realization by the participants that the Spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation that had incarnated on earth in, with and through Jesus of Nazareth the Christ is not confined to the various Christian Churches alone but is also available to all human beings of goodwill as announced by the angels (Lk 2: 14). It was also realized by the participants that it is by working for peace in the world that we can become true sons or daughters of God (Mt 5: 9), and that peace in the world is impossible without peace among religions in the world. The participants also accepted the words of Mahatma Gandhi that 'if we are to achieve true peace in the world, it must begin with the children'. Children have also been dear to the heart of Lord Jesus Christ. 'The kingdom of God belongs to such as these' had taught the Divine Master pointing to the children (Mt 19: 14). In the light of the above realizations, the participants of this two-day National Seminar have

unanimously agreed and declared that they will commit themselves to a culture of peace in India by working for the happiness and health of all children below 18 years of age in the country in collaboration with all like-minded Indian citizens belonging to the various religious traditions in our country. Towards the realization of this goal they have resolved to create a 'Special Task Force' of Christian leaders in India who will work sincerely, prayerfully and fearlessly for a culture of peace in India through interreligious cooperation with focus on the happiness and health of children below 18 years of age in India by making commitments to Lord Jesus Christ and Mother India.

Colloquium on Reclaiming Democratic and Constitutional Rights

A daylong colloquium was organized by India Peace Centre at Gass Memorial Hall, Raipur, Chhattisgarh on 17th of April 2018 to mark the 127th birth anniversary of Dr. B R Ambedkar. Theme of the colloquium was "Reclaiming the Constitutional and Democratic Rights". It was organized in collaboration with NCCI (Dalit and Adivasi Concerns) and Chhattisgarh Diocese of CNI. The colloquium reflected the spirit of many of our brothers and sisters seeking to defend democracy and secularism in pursuit of justice and peace.



Around 50 church leaders and pastors from different districts of Chhattisgarh participated in the colloquium which was led by Adv. Rajendra Sail, Mr. Arun Pannalal, Rev. Akhilesh Edgar, Mr. Kasta Dip, Dr. Yugal Rayalu, Dr. Vikas Jambhulkar, Mr. Pradip Bansrior and Rev. Dr. Atul Arthur. The program was inaugurated by Rt. Rev. Robert Ali, Bishop of Chhattisgarh Diocese of CNI.

Peace Vigil on Kathua and Unnao Rape and Murder Cases

While demonstrations were held in several cities across India as public outrage over a spate of rape and murder of children spiral, India Peace Centre organized a Peace Vigil in Nagpur on 20th of April and joined demonstrations at New Delhi to condemn the rape and murder cases over the last couple of months shaking the whole nation. In April, a 16-year-old, who was allegedly raped by a BJP lawmaker in Unnao, tried to commit suicide outside UP Chief Minister's house. The tipping point was the rape and murder of an 8-year-old in Kathua, where the chargesheet spoke of unspeakable brutality.



Members of civil society, students, social activists, religious leaders came together in Nagpur to light a candle of hope and justice for the families of the victims and prayed for peace and harmony in the country.

Plastic pollution and management

The World Earth Day Network is an organization which conducts annual campaigns in every city according to the theme of the year. This year the theme was Abolition, Reduction or Total Ban on Plastic. India Peace Centre has always been a regular participant of this annual event by taking different initiatives that culminate on World Earth Day. This year too India Peace Centre in association with the SFS College, many organizations, institutions, colleges, students, teachers, social workers and environmentalists held a massive campaign against minimization of plastic use and pollution caused thereof. Engineer Milind Pagare, an expert from Nashik, who is in this field for decades and has a plastic free house in Nashik made a presentation of about his knowledge and experiences of reduction, reusing and avoiding plastic waste so as to make people aware of the harmful impacts of plastic pollution. The seminar was

organized at India Peace Centre on 22nd April 2018. Mr. Pagare interacted with the participants and suggested alternative uses instead of plastic.



The chief guest for the occasion was Mrs. Nanda Jichkar, Mayor of Nagpur Municipal Corporation along with Mr. Rajan Talmale, ACF. Both of them planted a tree in the premises of India Peace Centre along with Mr. Kasta Dip, Director of India Peace Centre. Various stalls were available and alternatives of plastic were displayed there. A short rally with placards displaying messages on harmful effects of plastic was held after the seminar.

Breaking Every Chain: A Youth Retreat

On 1st May 2018 the Youth retreat was organised at St. Andrews Church, Chandrapur by the Diocese Youth Fellowship Committee, Nagpur, in partnership with India Peace Centre, Nagpur. Nearly 200 youth from rural congregations participated actively with full zeal and enthusiasm. DYFC Youth president Hrudhay Addurwar addressed the youth about the youth movement of this retreat. The main speaker was Rev. John Joseph. The theme of the retreat was "Breaking every chain". Rev. John Joseph, a renowned pastor from Nagpur led Bible study and gave practical talks on the problems faced by youth and encouraged the participants to get closer to Jesus who lived a life worth emulating.



At a time when the young people seem to be losing interest in the church this retreat was an attempt to empower the youth for the mission and evangelism ministries of the church

Ambassadors of Peace and Harmony

India Peace Centre and The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) Office for Dialogue & Ecumenism organized a Seminar in Collaboration with FMA Community of Maria Vihar in Nashik, Maharashtra on 5th May 2018. A group of 71 youngsters were greeted and welcomed by Sr. Philomena B. D'Souza, the animator of the community. The purpose of this seminar was to offer young college students an opportunity to gain deeper awareness of their responsibility to become ambassadors of peace and harmony.

Mr. Kasta Dip, Director of India Peace Centre, spoke on the necessity to be friendly and in harmony with self, others, nature and God in whose image and likeness each one is created. With a very effective power point presentation and in a very friendly manner, Kasta Dip helped the youngsters to reflect and become aware of their significant role in society to build peace and harmony.



Sr. Teresa Joseph FMA spoke briefly on the importance of peace and harmony and how youngsters can be ambassadors of peace and harmony. She referred also to the unique meeting Pope St. John Paul II initiated with the Religious Leaders in Assisi on 27th October 1986 and the others that followed. The Final Statement of the 33rd General Body Meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) has rightly affirmed "To Live in Unity in the midst of Diversity, both within the Church and in the country" and proposed 20 Lines of action. During this seminar: "Training Young College Students to be Ambassadors of Peace and Harmony", we focussed on the second part of proposal 3: To promote and intensify Small Christian Communities (SCCs) and Family Units for the all-round integral formation of the faithful and for inter-religious cooperation, peace and harmony.

The youngsters were the protagonists in the group work that followed. As they put their hands to the book: "Paha Mothi Swapna Khari Swapna!" and picked up the topic they most liked. Amazingly their choices moved around: Develop the greatness within you,

Conquer fears and worries, Building self-confidence, Avoid depression and discouragement, How to get what you expect, Ways to keep friendship going and growing etc. Youngsters brought in the personal summary of the session, five others dared to share what they are taking along with them for life from the seminar, a few others expressed their desire to commit themselves to promote peace and harmony beginning with themselves and their family and moving to the larger circle of friends and neighbours.

The five staff members of Maria Vihar Professional School enriched the seminar with their presence, active involvement and inspiring sharing. The moment of prayer, the fraternal meal together and a few moments of laughter brought added joy to the Seminar. "It was worth coming", "It was indeed an enriching day", "We learned much and will do something to build peace and harmony" are some of the expressions that resounded in the hall.

Interfaith Conference on Universal Brotherhood and Sisterhood

India Peace Centre in partnership with BIRDS, Bangalore and other partner organizations organized an interfaith conference on universal brotherhood and sisterhood at Vidyajyoti College, NARBI, Bangalore on 13th and 14th of May 2018. Two days of engagement and interactions with each other helped the participants and organizers to affirm that interfaith dialogue is essential to avoid religious fundamentalism and religious fanaticism which leads to religious communalism, results in arson, looting, killing, rape and damage to properties. The selfish evil forces with vested interest promote religious fundamentalism and fanaticism to divide and to create communal disharmony to fulfil their selfish desires. But interfaith dialogue provides space for people of different religions to come together and discuss about their religions, clarify the doubts and promote interreligious understanding and creates interreligious relations, which avoids frictions between religions and religious communities.



Participants reasserted that the major problem that India faces today is religious fundamentalism which is basically a defect in attitude. We often do not know the faiths of other believes and their practices. This type of ignorance sometimes leads us to petty quarrels, fights and other harmful relationships. At times, it takes the form of a tolerance which almost negates the other or, at the most, has nothing to do with the other. Such an attitude does not lead one to a healthy encounter. It sabotages seriousness in mutual learning and relationship. To the extent one affirms one's own faith or ideology to be the only truth there is not much of an opening to healthy encounters. Fundamentalism is a form of closure. The eyes are turned inside and there is a refusal to see the world at large.



It was also affirmed that interreligious dialogue helps us understand our religion better in the context of pluralism. It enables us to have our doubts clarified with regard to other religions. It provides opportunity for us to reread our scriptures and doctrines and dogmas in the context of pluralism. It creates a healthy atmosphere where we realize that we have to reinterpret our doctrines and dogmas in the presence of other faiths. Our religion is enriched in the context of other religions through dialogue. All exclusive claims of our religions become meaningless in the presence of other religions. Through dialogue, the adherents of each religion develop openness and broad-mindedness. They begin to respect other faiths. It educates its adherents theologically and ultimately enables them to create new theological insights about other faiths which helps them to respect other faiths and enables them and educate its adherents to see the meaning and truth revealed in other faiths also.

Green Care: World Environment Day



India Peace Centre joined the campaign against plastic pollutions and organized an awareness program on the same on 5th June 2018 at India Peace Centre, Nagpur. Mrs. Nanda Jichkar, Mayor of NMC, inaugurated the program and lauded the efforts of India Peace Centre in increasing the green cover of the earth by tree plantation and making its premises plastic free. Dr. T S Rawal, Dr. John Menachery and Ms. Sulabha Chakravorthy highlighted the alternatives to plastic and gave away saplings to all the participants and inspired them to adapt to eco-friendly behaviours.

Concerns for environment and ecology top the list of priority India Peace Centre has and therefore ecological peace is important for sustainable peace and development. Participants lamented the facts that ecology has been harmed by the ambitious economic development projects of the governments and MNCs making many species of flora and fauna rare. Therefore, it is our moral duty to conserve and preserve environment from destruction.

Common Prophets of the Jews, Christians, Muslims and Hindus

An interfaith conversation on Common Prophets of the Jews, Christians, Muslims and Hindus was organized by India Peace Centre in Nagpur on 30th of June 2018. 38 people representing different faiths gathered to ponder over the common prophets to understand the issues of differences in faiths, religious discourses and ideas such as where they are emanating from and are there common grounds where all can stand in harmony with each other. Dr. Bharat Jhunjunwala, Formerly Assistant Professor of Economics, Indian Institute of Management, Bengaluru has proposed that 5 Prophets of the Hindu and Semitic religions were the same persons who lived in the Indus Valley. Two streams of people migrated from the Indus Valley after its collapse around 1500 BCE. One stream led by Moses during the Exodus travelled from here to West Asia. Another stream migrated eastward to the Ganga Basin. In course of time, both streams lost memory of their origins in the Indus Valley and re-identified their origins in West Asia and pan-Indian Subcontinent respectively. Thus, today the Semitic and Hindu people think they have different heritage.

Jhunjunwala has looked at the geographical descriptions of the Prophets in the two religious streams and tried to establish their common origins in the Indus Valley. He has considered evidences from geography, archaeology, similarity of names and living

traditions in developing the hypothesis that Semitic Adam was Hindu Swayambhu Manu; Semitic Cain was Hindu Indra; Semitic Noah was Hindu Vaivaswat Manu; Semitic Abraham was Hindu Rama; and Semitic Moses was Hindu Krishna.



The hypothesis, if accepted, would lead to a deeper anchor for undertaking interfaith dialogue between the religions. The teachings of the Prophets would be the same in the two streams if they were the same persons. The same teachings have had different journeys over the millennia and have evolved differently in the two traditions. They are now available to us in versions that are seemingly opposed to each other. Two persons from the same town may change dramatically after migrating to two different countries and become very different culturally and socially over the decades. Yet, they could retrieve their original common history by looking at their common roots. Similarly, the Semitic and Hindu traditions have evolved the original teachings of the Prophets and these are available to us today in seemingly different teachings. Reconciling the two sets of teachings is the task that can now be anchored on the common identities of the Prophets in the two streams.

The conversations opened up some grounds for discussions but could not be conclusive. However, such a hypothesis by Dr. Jhunjhunwala was appreciated by all.

Bicycle Rally: International Day of Peace

Every year, on the 21st of September, the whole world celebrates the International Day of Peace. It is acclaimed to a different topic every year, so, this year it was on the subject “The right to peace”. Furthermore, this year marked the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

For this event, the India Peace Centre organized a Bicycle Rally. The cyclists covered a distance of 20 kms carrying the message of love and peace through Nagpur. The flag-off was at 6:45 am at the India Peace Centre, by 76-year-old cyclist Dr. Bhupendra Arya and Ms. India Runners up Ms. Ekta Bhayia. Around 150 cyclists participated and rode their bicycles through Nagpur. India Peace Centre’s members Mohammad Raffique, Svenja Hitzemann and Ronja Sperl were part of the Rally. The participants were able to choose one of two routes, depending on their speed. They all met at Futala Lake, where refreshments were distributed and pictures were taken. Afterwards, the Rally continued to the Mahatma Gandhi statue at Variety Square. Another stop was taken to acknowledge Gandhi’s mission of peace. Afterwards, all the cyclists came back to the India Peace Centre at around 8 am.



Once they were back at the India Peace Centre, Certificates of Participation were presented to all the participants completing the Rally. Special thanks went to Jigyasa Rawal, Mrs. Piyali Kanabar and Mr. Tarvinder Singh Jhans, who sponsored the refreshments. The event was planned and coordinated by Dr. Tejinder Singh Rawal. Swati Ramteke provided assistance in organizing the Rally.

Arts for Peace

Every year, on 21st of September, the whole earth celebrates the international day of peace. Every year, this special day has got its own theme. This year it was on the theme “The right to peace”.

In honour of the International Day of Peace, the India Peace Centre organised the project: “Arts for Peace”, between the 5th and the 15th of September. Nearly 300 students from five High Schools and five Colleges around Nagpur were asked to draw what Peace means to them. The students had one-hour time to finish their artworks. All the pieces were collected and displayed in an exhibition, which took place at the 21st and 22nd of September in the India Peace Centre.



The project closed in the evening of the 22nd of September with a talk on the topic: “The right to Peace” and the prize distribution in the High School and College category. Special thanks go to the Chief guest Dr Ashok Kale and IPC member Vikas Jambhulkar, who spoke on the theme of the International Day of Peace. About one hour later, the prize distribution started. Three winners were chosen in both age groups and got awarded with certificates and cash prizes.

The artworks were judged with the help of professional artist Lalit Vikamshi. On the one hand, the winners had unique ideas and managed to portray a deeper meaning through their drawings. On the other hand, they were able to complete their drawing really well in a short amount of time. Furthermore, three students from every age group got awarded with honourable mentions for their well-done work and everyone who took part received a certificate of participation.

Relevance of Gandhi in today's India

Gandhi Jayanti was celebrated at India Peace Centre in 2nd of October. Prof. S. B. Singh, retired Vice Principal, VMV College Nagpur, was the chief guest of the function while Dr. Yugal Rayalu, Dharampeth Science College, presided over the function. Two volunteers from Germany, Ms. Svenja and Ms. Ronja, were guests of honour.

In his scholarly address Prof. Singh touched almost every aspect of Gandhian philosophy. He said that Gandhian philosophy transcends national boundaries today. President Barack Obama, while addressing the giant parliament session of India, said that, "I'm the President of the USA because of Mahatma Gandhi". Prof. Singh recollected that Bob Dylan, in his Noble Prize acceptance speech, said, "There was a man named Gandhi... Let us make ourselves relevant to him". Prof. Singh concluded with his remark that it is for the present politicians to make themselves relevant to Gandhi.

In his presidential address Dr. Rayalu appreciated Prof. Singh for presenting a highly studied presentation. He said that, like all philosophies, the Gandhian philosophy has an eternal appeal. We need to understand it in the changing times



It was a pleasant surprise to have two young German guests for the program. Ms. Svenja and Ms. Ronja made a joined presentation on their understanding of Gandhi. They informed the gathering that many social movements in Europe are inspired by Gandhi.

Fulfilling Sustainable Development Goals

Every year, on 24th of October, the whole world is celebrating UN-Day. The United Nations were created to promote peace, human rights and provide a platform for all nations of the world to work together in this process. The organization of 193 member states has been working with these goals since 1945 but there is still much work to do.



The India Peace Centre, Nagpur used the occasion to initiate a round table discussion under the lead question: “What can we do to fulfil the Sustainable Development Goals?” The program was opened by five IPC Core Group members who all concisely addressed one of the main concerns of the India Peace Centre that are also featured in the Sustainable Development Goals.

Dr. Rayalu covered the topic “Equality” and focused on the suggestion to make the UN itself more equal by balancing the powers of all member states and democratizing the UN Security Council. Dr. Shende spoke on the issue “Health” and Dr. Rawal gave an account on the “Environment”. Both concluded that it is crucial to take care of oneself and of one’s surrounding in order to achieve happiness. In this process even small things like switching off the light when you leave the room or keeping your trash with you instead of throwing it into nature if you can’t find a dustbin can make a great difference. The other two topics “Peace and Justice” and “No Poverty” were addressed by Dr. Khawaja and Adv. Raffique

After the initial presentation, the crowd of around 30 visitors of all age groups was invited to share their opinions on the different topics. The interaction, chaired by IPC Director Kasta Dip, was well received and underlined the importance of these topics in today’s society.

In the end we are all responsible and it is our duty to keep on questioning and asking for alternatives. That’s our part in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals.

In Support of #MeToo



Sexual violence and harassment are still a huge issue throughout the whole world. The #metoo movement has called attention to this in the past years and motivated women everywhere to share their trauma from abuse and demand justice. In this spirit plenty of NGOs in Nagpur came together to have a joined march on 26th of October through the city. The aim of the march was to point out the struggles women have to face.

Women rights are human rights. Therefore, India Peace Centre was present at the march to support the movement. The march started near the zoo, which is located in the centre of Nagpur. Later, the members started to walk through the city, before they came back to their starting point in the end.



Restorative Justice and Peacebuilding

“We are hoping, praying, and desiring a better world as Mathai Zachariah so often referenced, a world where justice and peace have embraced. This is restorative justice- this is the goal of our peacebuilding endeavours. And alongside being a nice state to live in- restorative justice is a heavenly charge to those who do peacebuilding. So where is the impossibility in that? It is impossible for humans to do it alone- we need other peacebuilders, we need divine guidance, and we need to be inspired to help facilitate a world unlike any that has existed in the humanly realm. And we need to not give up on that even when it seems impossible. Because impossible isn’t a bad word to peacebuilders- it is our inspiration instead. This is our hope, this is our prayer, and indeed. This is our mission” were the lines said by Rev. Dr. Leah Robinson while delivering the 6th Mathai Zachariah Annual Memorial Lecture at the United Theological College, Bangalore on 13th November 2018 on the theme “Restorative Justice and Peacebuilding”.



The lecture was presided over by Rev. Dr. Chilkuri Vasanta Rao, Principal of UTC. Rev. Asir Ebenezer shared about Dr. Mathai Zachariah and introduced the theme. The lecture was responded by Rev. Dr. Vincent Rajkumar, Director of CISRS, Dr. Rini Ralte, Lecturer at UTC and Rev. Dr. Rohan Gideon, Lecturer at UTC.

Constitution as a Pillar of Indian Democracy

India Peace Centre observed Samvidhan Divas (Constitution Day) on 26 November 2018 at its premises by holding a panel discussion on Constitution as pillar of Democracy. Lawyers, social activists, students, politicians and educationists participated in the observance which was led by Kasta Dip, Director of India Peace Centre. Panellists included Dr. Yugal Rayalu from Dharampeth Science College, Dr. Vikas Jambhulkar, RTM Nagpur University, Adv. Mohammed Rafique and Mrs. Neerja Prasad from Geological Survey of India.



Panellists reiterated that constitution is not only a book but also a system of governance. It holds all Indians together and has laid down provisions for justice and peace. It ensures and protects secular and democratic characters of India as a nation state. Therefore, it is the duty of every citizen and governments to respect the nation by respecting the constitution and its ideals.

The preamble of the Constitution was recited by the participants at the end of the program which was led by Mr. S Q Zama, a former MLC of Nagpur. The event was also attended by Dr. P. H. Khandekar, son of the first elected Member of Parliament from Nagpur Mr. Hemchand Khandekar.

24 Hours of Climate Reality



On 4th of December, India Peace Centre and the Global Shapers Nagpur Hub organised a special viewing session of the Indian segment of the 24 Hours of Climate Reality Livestream. This 24-hour livestream is conducted once a year by the Climate Reality Project, an Initiative of former US Vice President and Noble Prize winner al Gore. 24 countries are covered over the course of one day, each country presenting their struggles regarding climate change and the actions and solutions that have been developed so far. The Indian segment was mainly focused on the danger of droughts due to rising temperatures and water demand and the air pollution, which is a serious problem, especially in the urban areas.

After viewing session, the participants of the program interacted in an open discussion on the specific issues they have to be tackled in the area of Nagpur. Here, the urban mobility is a big issue, that will hopefully be addressed through the Green City development plan. During the discussion a fruitful exchange of ideas between experienced activists and young, motivated participants took place.



Interreligious Prayer for World Peace

“Peace is the need of the hour and India Peace Centre is an organization that is very important to achieve peace in this community” – Core Group Member on the occasion of the 30th anniversary

India Peace Centre was founded in 1988 by Dr. Mathai Zachariah, as an interfaith and interreligious centre. It's a place where all kinds of people are able to come together in peace. Since then, India Peace Centre has worked to achieve acceptance and peace in the society.

On 7th December 2018 India Peace Centre reached an important milestone and celebrated 30 years of Peace Engagement. The anniversary program included an interreligious prayer for world peace. Eight different faith groups were represented by their respective religious leaders. A prayer was contributed by a member of the Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Catholic Christian, Protestant Christian, Jain, Muslim and Baha'i community. With praying together for peace, they showed that religion is a powerful tool to bring people together despite their differences. Furthermore, some of IPC's Core Group Members shared their personal experiences with India Peace Centre. They underlined the spirit of peace and community and the dialogue above all boundaries that is catalysed at India Peace Centre.



The program was moderated by Director Kasta Dip. He was later joined by Bishop Paul Dupare to release IPC's anniversary souvenir. The souvenir includes articles on different social and political topics, written by the Core Group Members and friends of India Peace Centre. The souvenir gives an overview on IPC's engagements and it was distributed among the guests at the program. Dinner was provided after the function to give the guests the chance to get into dialogue. About 70 guests joined and enjoyed the program. Special thanks go to the Core Group members who contributed the food, all the people who supported the souvenir through articles and advertisements and the religious leaders who joined us for the interfaith prayer. After reaching this important milestone, India Peace Centre is looking forward to the future and to continue its peace engagement.

Human Rights Defenders in the Making

On 10th December, 70 Years ago, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations. Since then the day is celebrated as Human Rights Day. To commemorate the event India Peace Centre conducted a Quiz on the topic Human Rights. The objective of the program was to educate and to sensitize young people on this important topic.

Before the launch of the Quiz, India Peace Centre's Director Kasta Dip informed the Students about the programs and engagements of India Peace Centre. He underlined the importance of the involvement of the young generation on the path towards peace. There was also a presentation on the history and development of the Human Rights given by Manav Makhija.



There were 70 online entries for the quiz and the students were able to participate in two categories, individual and group. The competition started with a group round, to choose the three out of the nine participating groups to go on to the final round. The group round was followed by the individual round. The best three participants in each category were able to win attractive prizes and awards.

In the group category, group 1 of City Premier College won the first prize, LAD College the second prize and City Premier College's second group won the third prize. In the Individual round, India Peace Centre congratulates Shivan Khare, who won the first prize, Aachal Aade (LAD), who won the second prize and Maria Alby (CPC), who won the third prize. Furthermore, everyone was awarded with a certificate of participation.

Bidding Adeu to Roger Gaikwad, Chairperson of India Peace Centre

Core group members and well-wishers of India Peace Centre bid farewell to Rev. Dr. Roger Gaikwad, Chairperson of India Peace Centre and the General Secretary of NCCI who completed his services on 31st of December 2018. He had been in the office of the General Secretary of NCCI for eight years and thus also chaired the Board of Trustees of India Peace Centre during that period. As an efficient administrator and articulate theologian, he has provided leadership to IPC and has contributed significantly to its ministries. Members were enthused by his personality and humility that he exhibited during his service. He is moving on to take up on another responsibility in Guwahati with the Church of North India.



Around 50 people came out to pay their respect to Dr. Gaikwad and showed their appreciation for his work in Nagpur over the past years. His calm and approachable nature was especially highlighted by many of the guests who spoke on their experiences with Dr. Gaikwad. He has always been a reliable companion, a “silent operator” and someone that puts in all his effort for the programs he is supporting. These characteristics will be greatly missed by the IPC, its Core Group members and everyone else who had the pleasure to work with Dr. Gaikwad so far.

Dr. Gaikwad, who was present with his wife and family, responded by challenging the gathering to be more proactive in their humanitarian work and put a special emphasis on the importance of working as a group. “We are all part of a movement” he concluded and thereby called upon everyone’s responsibility to take steps towards ecumenism and integrity.

The program conducted at IPC was wonderfully chaired by Ms. Piyali Kanabar who also addressed the audience in a motivating speech about the possibilities the new year holds for IPC. She encouraged the audience to keep working in the spirit of Dr. Gaikwad and go beyond the usual borders of the programs.

Sustainable Development Goals and Justice and Peace

To reach a sustainable development, the UN set 17 goals that are supposed to be the same for every country. The goals are addressing different issues, for example environment and poverty.

Even though, the goals are supposed to be the same for every country, some issues can be seen in different ways in other parts of the world. To understand these differences and struggles, India Peace Centre organised a partnership with Nagpur University on 16th of January 2019. Three of the University students prepared a presentation regarding one of the sustainable development goals in an Indian context. After each presentation, one of the German volunteers of India Peace Centre and Centre for Sustainable Development gave one presentation regarding the same goal in a German context. In connection of each topic, there was some time to ask questions, as well as to have some discussions.



In total, there were presentations on the topics, sustainable cities and communities, (goal 11), development assistance (goal 17) and clean energy (goal 7). During the presentations and the following discussions, it got clear, that there are different challenges that both countries have to face to fulfil the goals.

During the presentations on the 7th goal (affordable and clean energy) one main difference was laying on the issues of nuclear energy. Germany is trying to shut down all its nuclear power plants until 2022 as well as to change its whole energy system to renewable energy sources. India on the other hand, is investing in new nuclear power plants at the moment. As nuclear energy is producing no CO₂ emissions at all, a majority of the Indian students were of the opinion that it would be a good alternative to other energy sources as coal. In the presentations from a German point of view, the main concern was on the more problematic aspects of nuclear energy. Particularly on

the fact that there is no final solution for the nuclear waste in Germany yet and the risk of the accidents.

Furthermore, there were some more discussions on the issue of development aid, which concluded that many examples have shown that it is often problematic to send money to certain countries. Therefore, the participants agreed on the effectiveness of help in areas like education and health that are having more of a long-term effect.

All in all, the presentations lead to helpful discussions and showed in which aspects both countries are able to learn from each other.

Peace Education Training: Muzaffarpur, Bihar



From February 6th to 8th India Peace Centre organized a Peace Education Training in Muzaffarpur in the state of Bihar. The program was realized in cooperation with the Gandhi Research Foundation, Jalgaon and the local partners Prayatna, the Social Research and Development Foundation and Amar Trishala Sewa Aashram. Around 40 participants took part in the program and they came from different places both urban and rural. Most of them were exposed to the topics of communal peace and peace building for the first time and therefore benefitted a lot from the different sessions. Enthusiastic participation could be observed throughout the whole program.



The sessions dealt with subjects like peace and conflict from different perspectives such as caste, gender, religion, age or the international context. The sessions were facilitated by Dr. John Chelladurai (Gandhi Research Foundation), Ashwin Zala (Gandhi Research Foundation), Kasta Dip (India Peace Centre), Surendra Kumar (Prayatna), S C Verma and R K Mishra.

On February 6th the program was inaugurated by a host of dignitaries including religious leaders led by Swami Bhavananda Maharaj, Mrs. Usha Singh, Prof. Vikas Narayan and Prof. Arun Kumar. India Peace Centre would like to thank all the partners who helped organize this program and all the participants for the productive and open discussions.

Interfaith Harmony for Subaltern Concerns

India Peace Centre in partnership with Subalterns Alliance for Peace and Brothers for Integrated Rural Development Society, Bangalore organized two days of conference on interfaith harmony for subaltern concerns and human rights at Indian Academy Degree College, Bangalore on 8th and 9th of February 2019. A group of 140 participants including human rights activists, peacemakers, social workers, educationists, students, women activists and religious leaders attended the conference. Different aspects of peacebuilding and models of peace works were highlighted by speakers and participants. Interfaith initiatives in promoting peace and reconciliation with specific reference to religious values and tradition inspired the participants. The speakers included Dr. Wooday P Krishna, President of Karnataka Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, Rev. Dr. Packiam Samuel, Secretary General of Interfaith Coalition for Peace, Dr. Homi Dhalla, President of World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation, Mumbai, and Srm. Kathayani, Executive Trustee, CIVIC, Bangalore.



In Support of Sexual Diversity

The fourth year in a row, the LGBTIQ+ community Nagpur celebrated a Pride Parade in Nagpur on 16th of February. As Homosexuality was just legalized last year in India, the march was also celebrated on that important event. The parade was mainly organized by Sarathi trust, a local NGO, that supports the LGBTIQ+ community throughout the city in partnership with organizations like India Peace Centre.



India Peace Centre supports the LGBTQI community in their fight against injustice and discrimination. To show our respect and support, we were present at the Pride Parade with our office members. The parade started near RBI Square and later the participants started walking through the city. After around one hour the march reached its final location near the zoo, where the celebration continued.

Missiological Exploration With the Many Poor and Many Faiths

On 27th February, India Peace Centre welcomed the twelve participants of the Face to Face program 2019. Face to Face is a six-week long program, which is meant for theology students of the partner churches of CWM. The program was jointly organized between Council for World Mission (CWM), National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) and India Peace Centre. The participants came from a total of eight different countries: South Afrika, Malawi, Zambia, Indonesia, Samoa, India, South Korea and Germany. They all came to Nagpur to attend a cross cultural learning experience which included the understanding of the Indian culture, as well as other religions. On the main Topic: Building Live-Affirming communities, Face to Face with the many poor and the many faiths in Asia, they went through workshops and sessions of different topics. Through this program, the group also went to Delhi and Bangalore to attend workshops

there and to see different sides of India to understand its diversity. Therefore, the participants were located in Nagpur for four weeks, in Bangalore for one week and in Delhi for one week.



During their time in Nagpur, the program covered the topics of Understanding Indian Society, Understanding Caste System, Understanding Poverty, Understanding Hinduism, Understanding Islam, Understanding Buddhism, Religions and Questions of Justice and Peace, Ecological Justice as well as Multiple Religion Belongings. A lot of the sessions were connected to different religions and the program also included visits to different Hindu Temples in Nagpur. Additionally, to this session, the group was also invited to some homes of the core group members of India Peace Centre. With visiting persons who are belonging to different faiths and religions, the group was able to experience the different communities in a unique way, rather than just theoretically.

Peace across borders



On the occasion of the nearest violent happenings between India and Pakistan, India Peace Centre and the Pakistan India People's Forum for Peace and Democracy

organized a program on Peace across borders to show the importance of peace. Different Core Group members were asked to share their own experiences they had during their visits to Pakistan.

Dr. Rawal, as well as Dr Yugal Rayalu and Dr. Vilas Shende talked about the hospitality they encountered in Pakistan, while Asma Banu concentrated on the fact of how many families and friends got separated because of the difficulties between India and Pakistan. During their presentations, it became clear, that people on both sides of the border are suffering, even though they personally don't even in dispute each other.

Building Life Affirming Communities

During the six-week long Face to Face program which was hosted by India Peace Centre, the participants of the program took part in a Bible Study Workshop in Bangalore on the topic Building Life Affirming Communities. The weeklong workshop was organized by Council for World Mission, India Peace Centre and the United Theological College Bangalore. Each participant was given thirty minutes to present his or her bible study they had prepared beforehand. The papers mostly dealt with social issues that are currently present in their own countries and showed possible solutions using the Bible. Therefore, the workshop showed a brought spectrum of different issues that are present in the world today. Besides that, the resource people Rev. Dr. Allan Palanna, Rev. Dr. Dexter Maben, Rev. Dr. Rohan Gideon, Rev. Dr. Mothy Varkey and Rev. Dr. Pearly Walter were present in the discussions to give direction to the process. They were able to give the participants advice and helped them to develop their bible studies.



Furthermore, there were some more lectures held on the topics LGBTIQ community and gender issues. Afterwards, the participants were given time to explore the city of Bangalore. They visited the famous gardens and some local markets.

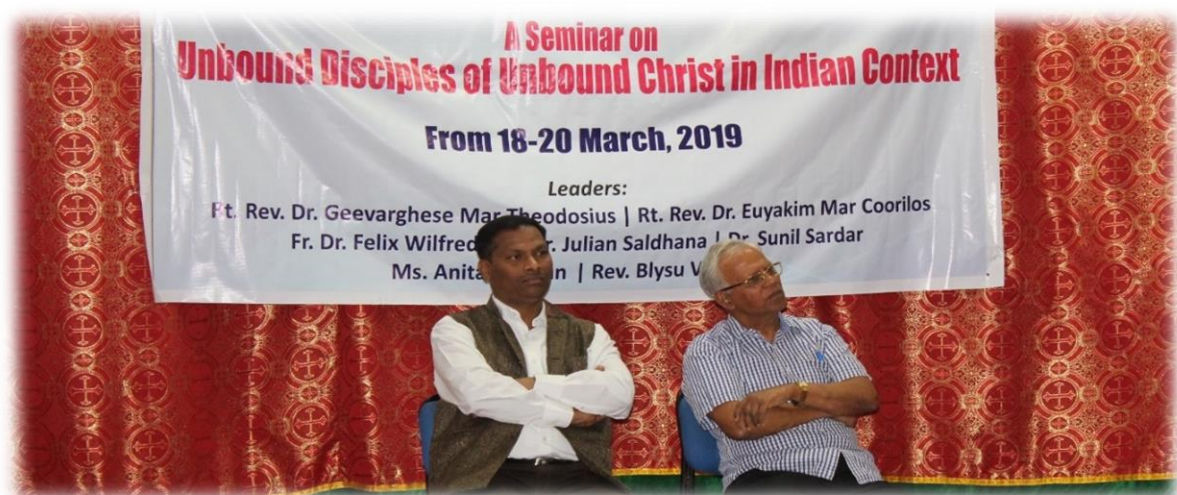
Faiths and Ideologies in Dialogue



During Face to Face India 2019, which was jointly organized by the Council for World Mission (CWM) and India Peace Centre, the participants spent one week in Delhi to get a wider impression of the diversity of India. The group also attended some workshops there. They had one session on the topic of Understanding Sikhism. Furthermore, a Workshop on Building Life-Affirming Communities: faiths and ideologies in dialogue was organised. It included the perspectives of the Dalits, Christians, Muslims, Adivasi and Hindus. India Peace Centre is thankful to YMCA for hosting the group during their time in New Delhi.

During their time in Delhi, they got a more practical impression of some of the religions they were taught about during their time in Nagpur and Bangalore. As a part of the programme, the participants visited Jama Masjid as well as Bangla Sahib Gurudwara and the Lotus Temple.

To show them the diversity of India ones more, the group attended another workshop in a more rural area in Faridabad. The workshop mainly dealt with the theme: “Unbound Decibels of Unbound Christ in an Indian Context”.



Combating Climate Change: Third Odisha River Conference

The 3rd Odisha River Conference on the theme – Promoting the Forest-River-Communities nexus for Conservation of Rivers and Combating Climate Change – was held at Prayas Conference Hall, Baripada on 24th-25th March 2019. It was a joint effort of 35 organisations, India Peace Centre being one of them. The conference was led by Water Initiatives, Gram Swaraj and Vasundhara to deliberate on the relationship between these vital aspects of ecology and initiate efforts to involve communities in the planning process.

About 250 people from across the country including those from basin communities, forest dwellers, farmers and fisher folks along with civil society representatives, academicians, senior journalists, river and water experts from across the country participated in the programme.



The Conference saw two general sessions, four technical sessions, one youth conclave and a River Festival in two days. The participants and facilitators understood the forest-river nexus in perspective of the state of Odisha in specific and India in general, in order to end water poverty, enrich lives and livelihood of local communities, and aid river basin conservation. They discussed the role of local and indigenous communities in protecting forests in river catchments, challenges faced therein and possible ways to integrate their role in current river basin management planning. While deliberating they also assessed the current plantation and afforestation models and their roles in enriching water resources/river basins and impacts of the same on tenurial rights of the forest/riparian communities.

They also discussed the possibilities of factoring in river basin model of 'climate mitigation and adaptation' planning through forest-river-communities' linkages in state and national climate action plans. This would also cover discussing forests beyond 'carbon sinks' to cover water, food, nutrition, livelihood, soil nutrients, biodiversity - flora and fauna - and other values of forests in relation to local communities.

At the end of the program they explored ways towards interstate river basin cooperation aspects in catchment protection through conservation of natural forests by ensuring communities' rights over the resources. While doing that the participants and stakeholders committed to continue dialogue on the important aspects of 'Sambalpur Declaration' adopted during 2nd Odisha River Conference and to chalk out plan for building a larger network of people and institutions working on forests, rivers and community rights issues.