

Report

**SEMINAR
GIRLS, CHILDREN AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS ARE
HUMAN RIGHTS 365 DAYS**



**THEME
FROM PEACE IN THE HOME TO PEACE IN THE WORLD:
MAKE EDUCATION SAFE FOR ALL**

10 December 2015 | Bishop's College, Kolkata

Partnership Program

**CALCUTTA DIOCESE - CHURCH OF NORTH INDIA
ALL INDIA COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN WOMEN
THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

Context

16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign

NOVEMBER 25 - DECEMBER 10



From 25 November the **International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women** to 10th December, **Human Rights Day** as declared by the UN the **16 Days of Activism Campaign to end gender based violence**. These 16 days of activism against gender based violence is commemorated throughout the world. This campaign aims to galvanize action to end violence women, girls children around the world. The international campaign originated from the first Women's Global Leadership Institute coordinated by the Center for Women's Global Leadership in 1991. The year 2015 marks the 24th year of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign.

It is in this context during this period of 16 Days of Activism against gender based violence Campaign the Diocese of Calcutta of Church of North India (CNI) in partnership with All India Council of Christian Women (AICCW) the women's wing of National Council of Churches in India(NCCI) and Episcopal Church in Scotland organized a Seminar on **Girls , Children and Women's Rights are Human Rights 365 Days** .The Theme of the Seminar was – **From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Make Education safe for All**.

This seminar was also an outcome of **South Asian Women's Networking Meeting** organized by IAWN (International Anglican Women's Network) of Anglican Communion held in Hyderabad in October 2015. Representatives of AICCW and some NCCI member Churches representatives from women's fellowship also participated like CNI, CSI. During this networking meeting there were discussions on how to promote the 16 Days of Activism Campaign and strategizing where churches can play prophetic role in promoting gender justice. AICCW promoted this campaign through series of activities and programs in partnership of some member churches throughout India. This seminar on Human Rights Day in Kolkata was one such activity of AICCW.

Partnerships of Hope: Weaving Justice and Peace:This program is especially organized during 200 bicentenary celebrations of Diocese of Calcutta. The Calcutta Diocese has deep commitment in its ministry towards the vulnerable and people in the periphery of the society. It has engaged in its mission and continues in its pilgrimage of nurturing, empowering, training and serving women, girls, children, orphans, old abandoned women, widows, people living with HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, relief work towards refugees, medical ministry etc. CNI is member church of NCCI. The Diocesan Women's Fellowship is connected to All India AICCW- women's wing of NCCI. The Episcopal Church of Scotland has mission partnership with Diocese of Calcutta also have nexus with AICCW. Scottish Episcopal Church has deep commitment in its prophetic ministry to promote justice and peace locally and globally. The Most Revd David Chillingworth Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, Rev Valarie Nellist Convener of Global Partnership Committee and some other leaders expressed deep concern regarding culture of violence on women, girls children in India. Hence on the historic occasion of 200 years bicentenary celebration of

Calcutta Diocese, AICCW and Episcopal Church of Scotland in engaged in an ecumenical endeavor on Human Rights Day to organize this seminar and create awareness regarding 16 Days of Activism Campaign to promote gender justice. 365 Days of Zero Tolerance to Gender Based Violence Campaign of NCCI was also launched.



Aim of the Seminar: Promote women, children, girl's rights to life as Human Rights 365 Days and make education safe for all especially children, girls and women.

Objectives of Seminar:

- To create a forum for survivors, children, church leaders and community leaders who will share stories of hope and their efforts to promote women's and children's rights as human rights.
- To share about different forms of campaigns (365 Days Zero Tolerance to Gender Based Violence, Thursdays in Black, 16 Days Activism Campaign), strategies and methodologies to promote life and dignity of children and make education (formal or informal) safe for all.
- To nurture spirituality and theology to end culture of violence on women and children.
- To enhance networking among churches, schools, Government and likeminded organizations, Community development agencies to promote women, children's and girls rights.
- To celebrate women and children's right to life in its fullness during centenary celebration of Calcutta Diocese.



Bishop David Chillingworth with Revd Praritosh Canning and Snigdha Simmick Inaugurating the Seminar and Promoting Zero Tolerance to Gender Based Violence Campaign on Human Rights Day

Outcomes

(1). More than 150 church leaders, pastors, Head of Educational Institutions from different in Calcutta, theological students, college students, some school students and professors attended this seminar.

(2).The seminar was based on participatory dialogue where even the stakeholders like children, students, girls, youth and survivors of violence

could participate. For Example –:

- Students of St Paul’s Mission School both Boys and girls through street theatre and role play portrayed violation of human rights and education rights of children in India to create awareness and also suggested remedy to promote education safe for all through creative expressions.
- Head of Educational institutions and community workers engaged in informal education and school after school projects shared their methodologies of promoting safe space for children/students/girls and their efforts to end abuse and sexual abuse of children.
- Mother’s survivors of rape, domestic violence and human trafficking shared women’s resilience and power or wounded body to heal communities and the violence, discrimination and stigma children of survivors face in schools and society. Such testimonies were eye openers and will help in strategizing education safe for all.
- Youth Church Leaders shared their challenges and suggested strategies of ending eve teasing and abuse within home, community and society.

(3) Due to awareness created about *16 Days of Activism Campaign* to eliminate violence on women children and girls and *365 Days Zero Tolerance to Gender Based Violence Campaign* during the seminar there was visibility of increased interest to promote such campaigns locally by participants

(4)Discussions on ending culture of violence on sexual minorities and promoting their human rights opened up new arena of discussion and awareness about church being true ecclesia of including all in body of Christ and societal role in ending such **violence.**



Creative Expressions and Street Theatre Methodology to Create Awareness by Students of St Paul's Mission School



Figure 1Moumita Blswas along with survivors of gender based violence sharing about Thursdays in Black Campaign

(4) Thursdays in Black was commemorated and introduced. Survivors of gender based violence shared their stories of hope and horror providing scope for discussion of strategies to end such violence. There was visibility of interest among participants to observe Thursdays in Black and reflect faith in action.

(5) Session on Intercepting Human Trafficking and Sexual Slavery increased awareness among participants to breaking the silence, and engage in creating awareness within schools, colleges and communities to intercept such violence. There were suggestions from Principals of schools for introducing awareness program on human trafficking in schools. Sharing's

from staff from International justice Mission and people working to end human trafficking increased interest among church leaders to engage in mission of healing victim's sexual slavery and human trafficking through trauma counseling and rehabilitation process etc.

(6) Participation of children living with HIV/AIDS and their testimony of discrimination and Stigma to receive education through creative expression and the session on Puncturing the Culture of Discrimination and Stigma increased awareness among participants to weave justice and peace so that children and people living with HIV/AIDS have rights to life in its fullness and rights to education.

(8) Visibility of Interest and awareness among participants especially heads of educational institutions and others to introduce and implement child protection policies in schools and colleges.

(9) Sharing by Leaders of Episcopal Church of Scotland during the seminar further provided scope for participants to have an understanding about global scenario and prophetic role of churches in Scotland in their efforts to end gender based violence and make education safe for all and their accompaniment to partner churches.



Children of Arunima Hospice through their song sharing their story of discrimination and inviting all to provide them life in its fullness



Figure 2 Rev Shona Broadman sharing about Human Trafficking and Human Rights issues in Scotland a

(10) Visibility of strengthened networking and enhanced relationship and mission bonds between AICCW/ National Council of Churches in India, CNI, Scottish Episcopal Church in Scotland other organizations and institution to promote gender justice

(11) Participants and resource persons revealed their spirituality through dialogue of life and such sharing's can be resource of weaving theology to promote gender justice.

ALARMING FACTS

India is the most dangerous place in the world to be a baby girl. Newly released data shows that an Indian girl child aged 1-5 years is 75% more likely to die than an Indian boy, making this the worst gender differential in child mortality for any country in the world. (www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/India)

About once every five minutes an incident of domestic violence is reported in India, under its legal definition of "cruelty by husband or his relatives". (<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india>).

One rape in every 20 minutes in India (www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com)

50 million girls have gone "missing" over the past century because of female infanticide and foeticide as per reports of UN Population fund.

A CBI report in 2009 says 90 per cent of trafficking took place within the country and there were some three million prostitutes, of whom about 40 per cent were children.

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