



WE WOMEN: OUR VOICES

Women concerns Ministry-NCCI



“A FRESH BEGINNING”

Dear Friends,

We had earlier brought out hard copies of our Bulletin, entitled “Samachar” . Now we are moving on to an electronic E-Bulletin. Hope this will help us in our faith and work journey. We also request women fellowships to send online/ Electronic reports of your programmes so that the same can be published in our E-Bulletin.

Articles may be sent to womenconcerns@ncci1914.com

INDIAN WOMEN DEMAND CHURCH VOICE TO CURB SEX ABUSE

The protest against a nun's alleged rape by a Catholic bishop, and the hierarchy's purported attempts to cover it up, refuses to die down. Several Indian theologians and local leaders say this should serve as a wakeup call for the Church to amend its systems and was of thinking.

"It's good the protests happened. They were an act of desperation. Nuns have had no voice here and have had to suffer in silence, but this is no longer acceptable," said Father Rudolf Heredia, a Jesuit priest and former professor at St. Xavier's College Mumbai. Five nuns from the Missionaries of Jesus began a public protest on Sept. 8 in the southern Indian city of Kochi seeking the arrest of Bishop Franco Mulakkal of Jalandhar Diocese. He was accused of raping one of their nuns her 13 times between 2014 and 2016

The Vatican removed Bishop Mulakkal from the administrative responsibilities of his diocese on Sept. 19, and Kerala [police arrested him](#) on Sept. 21. The five nuns ended their demonstrations on Sept. 22, a day after he was arrested.

The state court in southern India has denied bail to the Catholic bishop on grounds that his release from jail may hamper investigations as he could influence witnesses. The High Court of Kerala on Oct. 3 said releasing Bishop Franco Mulakkal of Jalandhar would not help the investigation or delivering justice in an "efficient, smooth and fair" manner."The court finds no reason to conclude at this stage, at least prima facie, that the allegations levelled by the nun are false and frivolous," the court order said. It also said that the accused could use his high-profile position to influence witnesses, who are mainly members of the nun's congregation that functions under the bishop.

Source: ucanews.com



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Prayer Points

1. We pray for girls who are forced into early marriage.
2. We pray for the foetuses been subjected to female infanticide.
3. We pray for the ministry of women.
4. We pray for women who face violence in everyday life.
5. We pray for men and women who through their voices are subverting the powerful.

A group of Theologian wrote to the Vatican and Indian Church Leaders asking that the bishop be required to step down while the pope is under way, "but no action was taken."

The Church is called to stretch out her hands to the downtrodden ones to stand in solidarity with victims, to raise them with hope and care to have holistic development. The time has come to reform our Churches, Sermons, Liturgies and educational ministries to address such issues.

**By: BisWarUp
Barrackpore
Diocese of
Kolkata**

Indian Anger Over Pope's Sex Abuse Letter

Women say atoning for clerical misdeeds is no substitute for punishment and reform

Pope Francis meets with nuns during his weekly general audience in Paul VI Hall at the Vatican on Aug. 22. His letter calling for fasting and prayer to atone for the sexual misdeeds of Catholic clergy has angered women in India. Pope Francis' call for fasting and prayer to atone for the sexual misdeeds of clergy has evoked angry responses from leading Catholic women in India who are demanding action to stem such crimes. The Aug. 20th papal letter asked for forgiveness for clerical abuse a week after U.S. court investigation reported that over 300 "predator priests" in the state of Pennsylvania had abused more than 1,000 children over several decades. Pope Francis stated that fasting could drive a desire for justice through a commitment to truth and charity. "Making the laity fast and pray is not the solution," female theologian Kochurani Abraham told "Clerical sexual infidelity should be punished and not hidden under the carpet." She said the church needs to make a distinction between sin and crime.

However, church officials had been reticent to deal with such matters, one of which has attracted international attention. "The silence of the church is deafening and the victim is made to feel guilty for raising her voice," Sister Nirmalini said. "Will the bishops stand up for justice for victims within the church?" Police have been investigating of Jalandhar after a Catholic nun, who is the former superior of a diocesan congregation under the bishop, accused him of raping her four years ago and then sexually abusing her 13 more times during the following two years. A group of theologians and activists wrote to the Vatican and Indian church leaders asking that the bishop be required to step down while the probe is under way. "But we saw no action," Abraham said. "The letter was not even acknowledged." Astrid Lobo Gajiwala, an activist and a member of the Indian Bishops' Council for Women, expressed surprise that even two months after the police investigation of Bishop Mulakkal started; the church is still not acting. "Isn't it time that the church started an investigation to find out whether he should continue as bishop? Church has to be seen to be proactive on these crimes against women and children.

Source- [Pope Francis](#), [ucanews.com](#), [Sister Nirmalini](#), [Bishop Franco Melaka](#)



Thousands of Women Under Aidwa Banner Vow to Fight Violence, Fear, Hunger and Unemployment

Raising slogans of unity and resistance, thousands of women from 23 states across the country marched resolutely, under the banner of the All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA), from Mandi House to Parliament Street in New Delhi on September 4, 2018. This massive gathering was organized to draw the nation's attention to the unprecedented rise in communal and other forms of violence against women and the denial of decent work and right to food under the Modi regime. Crimes against women and children have increased by 34% in the last four years. Victims and other persons fighting for justice against such crimes addressed the rally. A resolution was adopted vowing to confront and change this state of affairs, refusing to be silenced by the BJP-RSS promoted culture of fear and standing up for equality and basic rights enshrined in the Constitution. Women resolved to expose the Sangh Parivar and the Modi-led government for the failure to deliver on their promises.

The women who addressed the rally systematically demonstrated how the government led by Narendra Modi and supported by the Sangh Parivar is a lethal combination of reactionary and communal ideology and corporate neo-liberal policies. They also showed the spirit of resistance and hope by demonstrating how they, in their own ways, were working towards resisting such political forces in order to work towards social transformation and systemic change.

Source-<https://www.aidwaonline.org/thousands-women-under-aidwa-banner-vow-fight-violence-fear-hunger-and-unemployment-aggravated-bjps->

UK: Government accused of inaction as number of British girls forced into marriages abroad has soared by a third since 2015

The Independent (21.08.2018) - The number of girls being forced into marriage ahead of the summer holiday period has increased by more than a third in recent years, according to a leading charity which has accused the government of an abject failure to get to grips with the problem. Karma Nirvana condemned the Home Office for shelving a campaign raising awareness of the practice, which sees girls taken abroad to be married off to strangers, in the "critical" run-up to the summer break - the time of the year when the problem is at its peak. Speaking exclusively to The Independent, the national charity - which provides training to the police, NHS and social services - revealed it learned of 150 new cases of forced marriage from May to July, a rise of more than a third on the figure seen in the same period in 2015, when it received 99 new cases. The charity also found cases of forced marriage soared by 40% at the start of the school holidays this year, and revealed it was receiving reports of cases at a rate of two a day in July, more than double the average of 25 seen in the first four months of the year, with 44 cases reported in May and June. And the figures do not reflect the full scale of the problem, as forced marriage continues to be starkly underreported - with the Home Office describing it as a "hidden crime".

Source- <https://ind.pn/2N199G0>

NEWS

Presbyterian Women Fellowship

Upcoming 17th Biennial Conference of Presbyterian Women Fellowship ON 26TH-28TH October, 2018, at Mawlyngkhung, Meghalaya, Remember in your prayers

Women have the character and capacity to give the world an alternative to the patriarchal paradigm, a society of complementary edifying partnership, and a culture of Love, Justice and peace. Indeed women go through travail to give birth to life. It is not merely a life of subsistence, but a life which could be full.

Rev. Dr. Roger Gaikwad.

South Africa: Call for End to Child Marriages

A petition by close to 800 delegates to the Southern African Development Community's people's summit has called for an end to child marriages, among other issues. The petition was handed over to the new SADC chairperson, President Hage Geingob, at the last session of the 38th summit of heads of state and government last weekend.

Before the official handover, the petition was read out by Sofonea Shale at Ausspannplatz's Augustino Neto Square after a march by the delegates from the Windhoek Showgrounds. Compiled after various sessions held on the sidelines of the SADC summit on Thursday, the petition called on the heads of state to ensure that traditional and religious leaders as well as members of parliament play a role in ending child marriages in their communities. Efforts to address child marriages must focus on grassroots initiatives recognising that child marriages are more prevalent in rural areas," read the petition. Although Namibia does not have statistics on child marriages, civilians have spoken out about its occurrence in rural areas, including the Zambezi and Kunene regions.

Critics have spoken out against the olufuko festival, (a female initiation ceremony prevalent in northern Namibia for girls from the age of 13, to prepare them for marriage) which they feel has led to the objectification of women and encourages child marriages. Gender equality minister Doreen Sioka also spoke out against child marriages in March this year during International Women's Day celebrations at the Zambezi region's capital, Katima Mulilo.

Source- <https://bit.ly/2N842Ux>

**“EXTREMISTS HAVE
SHOWN WHAT
FRIGHTENS THEM
MOST : A GIRL
WITH A BOOK!**

**WITH GUNS YOU
CAN KILL TERROR-
ISTS. WITH EDUCA-
TION YOU CAN
KILL TERRORISM”.**

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MALALA YOUSAFZAI



Certificate Course on Gender Justice

Theme: Prophetic Ecclesia-Catalyst for Gender Justice

Women Concerns Ministry, NCCI

The Women Concerns Ministry conducted a **Certificate Course on Ecumenical formation for Gender Justice** at Bangalore from 13th -17th June 2018. The programme took place in Vishranti Nilayam, C.S.I Women's House. The theme for this programme was ***Prophetic Ecclesia-Catalyst of Gender Justice***.

The purpose of this programme was

- to nurture praxis oriented spirituality among the trainees to end gender-based violence and build inclusive just communities; and
- to create awareness among trainees about various policies, UN goals, campaigns in local, national and global level and the process and methodology of implementation of such goals, policies to end gender based violence.

The training included three Exposure programmes. The first was a visit to **Visthar** (Founded in 1989, Visthar is a secular civil society organization committed to Social Justice and Peace). The exposure was facilitated by Mercy Kappen, the director of Visthar. The second exposure was to the **OASIS Rehabilitation Centre**. It was facilitated by Advocate Christy, who highlighted the work done against trafficking and attending to the needs of survivors. The third visit was to Global Concerns, an organization working for ending domestic violence. This exposure was facilitated by Brinda Adige the director of Global Concerns.

The outcome of this programme: The trainees were encouraged to deconstruct stereotype gender based roles, and to develop leadership and communication skills in influencing the society on the importance of Gender Justice.



Rev. Moumita Biswas, Executive Secretary, Women Concerns Ministry- NCCI , along with a few resource persons and trainees.



THANKS & FAREWELL!

Rev. Moumita Biswas was ordained as Presbyter in the North East India Diocese of the Church of North India on 2nd September, 2018.

We thank her for her services as Executive Secretary. NCCI Women Concerns Ministry .

We wish her all the best in her new ministry in North East India.

CONTACT US

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