



## Publisher's Note

It is my immense pleasure to publish the 3rd Issue of Voiceless Voices (October – December 2023), the quarterly bulletin of Global Forum Against Caste-based Discrimination (Global Forum). Since its inception in the US in 2014, it has been working on advocacy and campaign for establishing equality, human dignity and social justices for vulnerable and marginalized people across the world in general and Dalit community of Nepal in particular.

Voiceless Voices, we believe, is a crucial tool for sharing and dissemination of information and learning knowledge about the pertinent issues and discourse world-wide. Keeping these things in mind, Global Forum has initiated publishing this magazine from April 2023.

The Global Forum, the mother organization of Voiceless Voices is closely watching the preparatory activities and planning of World Social Forum (WSF), leading by NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN) with the global slogan "Another World is Possible". It has been good start in Nepal that the world, including third world countries like Nepal are facing so many challenges and it is expected that the WSF would be an instrumental for bringing about positive change.

Besides, WDF would be organized with the leadership of Dalit NGO Federation (DNF) Nepal. In WSF, it is expected to discuss many issues in the numbers of parallel sessions/activities. WSF and WDF both the Forums are expected to be raising the voices against social injustices, discrimination and promotion of peace and harmony and well-being of human being and nature as well.

There are tensions of caste-based atrocities, discrimination and stigmatization; gender-based violence, ethnic/racial exclusion, extortion; sexual abuse, rape, human trafficking, geographical imbalance of resource allocation. As there are 91 countries taking part in WSF 2024, it is high time to speak out against world injustices, suppression and inhuman behavior and tendency by launching social movement and creating better civic spaces.

As such, the equality and human dignity as well as just society have been continuously challenged. The proliferation and dominance of neo-liberal capitalism have led to extreme inequality, displacement, warfare, climate-related catastrophes, and loss of livelihoods, diminished opportunities, and widespread poverty. Humanity stands at a critical crossroads as global warming and geopolitical tensions threaten mankind.

Similarly, Nepali Dalits community, so-called untouchable, consisting of 15% of total population have been discriminated, stigmatized, negated, restricted inter-caste marriage, being raped and even killed for only being a Dalit. Although Nepal has promulgated the Constitution of Nepal (2015) and has 31 fundamental rights, the implementation aspect seems to be very weak as there is under-representation or non-representation of Dalits in state mechanism.

The Voiceless Voices and its mother organization Global Forum wants WSF to raise the voices against centuries-long caste-based ostracize, stigmatization, atrocities, abuse and latent genocide and killing of Dalits; violence against women (VAW), trafficking, economic inequality and exclusion from employment, landlessness of Dalits, and promotion of peace, human rights, climate justice in specific manner and sustainable development at large.

Likewise, Forums need to be able to create adequate pressure to the Government of Nepal as well as world-power for enhancing distributive justice, promoting equity, full democracy and create safe and secured civic spaces taking them into confidence to get their solidarity, avoiding conflict and war against particular nation state and community; and call for protecting the environment and ecology. It should be able to draw attention of political parties, mainstream social movements, human rights organizations.

At last, but not the least, I would like to express my sincere best wishes for successfully organizing WSF by overcoming pre-defined objectives. Similarly, WSF will have adequate discourse on the issues and be able to make them heard by national and international governments so that neglected and marginalized people be able to get social justice, human rights, equality, dignity and fundamental freedom.

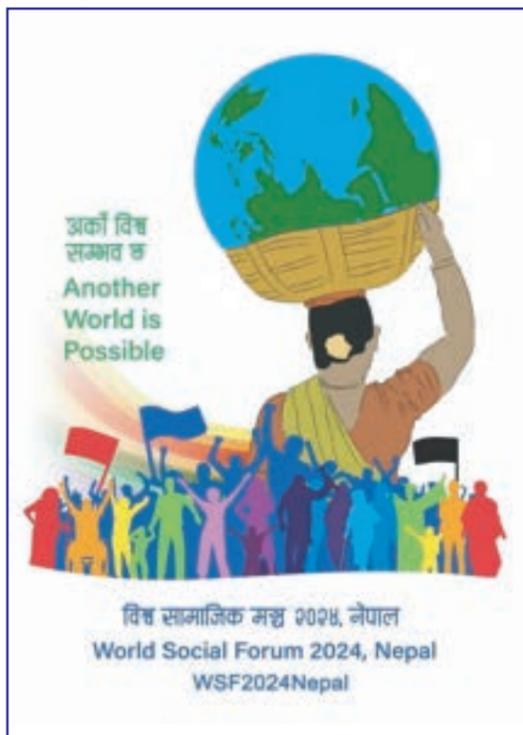
Thank you.

**Padam Bishwokarma**  
President, Global Forum

## Shall WSF be able to build another World?(!)

BY DHANA BAHADUR MIJAR

Kathmandu: It is good news for all of us that Nepal is going to organize World Social Forum (WSF) 2024 with the global slogan, "Another World is Possible!". This 16th edition of WSF would be coordinated by NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN) which is supposed to be held at Bhrikutimandap, Kathmandu from 15-19 February 2024.



A Call from WSF-2024, it reads the statement, "WSF serves as an open space and platform for the convergence of a diverse range of participants, including social movements, laborers, farmers, civil society groups, marginalized communities, and those affected by the impacts of neoliberal capitalism and privatization." Further it mentions that the WSF's purpose is to create reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences and interlinking for effective actions.

The first World Social Forum was held in city of Porto Alegre, Brazil, the Latin American country in 2001. The concept was emerged out from welcoming to

the new world, another equitable, just, discrimination and violence free, peaceful world envisioning of "Another World is Possible!". The 2024 edition of WSF is themed around the call for "Another World Now."

NFN's ex-president and national organizing committee member Dr. Netra Timsina says that Nepal is organizing WSF to share the message to the international community. "WSF will be able to share message to the international community about our peace process" Dr. Timsina clarifies, "making adequate discourse on social inequalities, violence and killing brought by Neo-liberalism."

"WSF will focus on discussing about climate change, warfare, genocide, inequality, injustices, state impunity, discrimination based on gender, class, caste, race, descent,

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### Nepal is organizing WSF to share our message to International Community

What does World Social Forum (WSF) really mean?

Now the world is suffering from climate change, warfare, genocide, inequality, injustices, state impunity, discrimination based on gender, class, caste, race, descent, geographical location, ethnicities, gender orientation and many more which are the mal-products of suppression and exploitation of power structure and the outcomes of neo-liberalism. These are not good things for human well-beings and human should seek another world, another worldview, deconstructing the center and hierarchies and preparing the strategies for overcoming it.

What is the key objective of WSF and what is the rationale of organizing in Nepal?

The objectives of WSF is to bring every movements of world in integrated and joint form and raise the voice louder in one hand and making the WSF more stronger in the other. Likewise, warfare and bombardment is practicing in the world like Israel's attacks to Palestine. Such inhuman warfare should be stopped. But the ego problem of world power, world is going to face a severe crisis like chaos and disorder.

And Nepal is organizing WSF because we want to

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**Dr. Netra Timsina**  
Member, NOC

## A Dalit Professor on Protest against Caste-based Discrimination

By New Delhi Correspondent

Ms. Ritu Singh is a former Dalit assistant professor at Daulat Ram College, a constituent college of Delhi University. She has been protesting against alleged caste-based discrimination and harassment by the college principal, Dr Savita Roy, since 2020. Her services were terminated by the college and the matter is in court.

She with the large number of supporters, has been on a strike for over 135 days protesting against caste discrimination urging the removal of Daulat Ram College's Principal, Dr. Savita Roy, alleging caste-based discrimination and her subsequent removal from the position of Assistant Professor.

On last month, the Delhi police detained her and her supporters, and allegedly ransacked her protest site outside the Arts faculty of the Delhi University campus. The police also reportedly tore copies of the Indian Constitution and a picture of Dr BR Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Constitution and a Dalit icon.

Delhi police has also acted the 'forceful removal' of protest tents and belongings of protestors from the demonstration site. Ms. Ritu was released after 7 hours.

Since the starting of the protest outside gate no. 4 of Delhi University's Arts Faculty, it has evolved into a



**Ritu Singh with her supporters**

symbol of resistance. Blue and tricolour flags adorn one corner, while a bookstall featuring Dalit literature enhances its allure. A huge banner of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, the father of the Indian Constitution, was erected at the protest site.

Addressing the media on the site, Singh stated, "The ongoing peaceful demonstration adheres to constitutional norms, yet we encounter opposition. The police claim my lawful removal, yet no documentation is provided upon request. It seems the hurdles arise from this being a protest for a Dalit cause by a Dalit." She is still in the protest.

WSF will be able to share message to the international community and making adequate discourse on social inequalities, violence and killing brought by Neo-liberalism

share and spread out message to international community of our achievements of peace process after (Maoist-led) armed conflict, successfully promulgation of constitution, and achievement of secularism and federal democratic republic. It would be the good platform to make discussion and discourse on social inequalities, Gender based violence, human trafficking, climate issue, anti-authoritarianism, exploitation of neo-liberalism that would be very useful for creating another world. These are the key takeaway of WSF.

**What would be the modality of organizing the WSF in opening and closing? How the parallel sessions run and how many side events be organized?**

On opening day, 15 Feb, we will organize mass rally. In the rally, representatives from 91 countries including Africa, America, Asia, Europe and Latin America will take part in the WSF. This Forum is not against any country (ies), but rather it appeals for stoppage of warfare, chaos, militarization and genocide. It is not the nature of inviting Prime Minister, Minister or VIPs and we will have participation of keynote speakers from differently abled, social campaigners, representative of sexual minorities etc.

Renowned social activist Medha Parker (India) Narmada conservation; Aleida Guevara, Cuban Physician and Political Activist; Mr. Shoya Yoshida, General Secretary of International Trade Union Confederation Asia-Pacific; Ms. Borry Tunkara, a Youth Agriculture Leader from Africa; Prof. Thomas Wallgren (Finland), Philosopher and Political Thinker; and Nasima Akhtar (Bangladesh) from People with Disabilities (PWDs) sector who will speak and share their personal struggle and achievement and their contribution for making an another better world. On 15 Feb, evening, we will have cultural programs as well. Altogether one thousand two hundred organization across the world will participate the event, out of which half number will be from Nepal. It is expected that more than 420 parallel sessions will be held and more than 30 thousand people witness the Forum(s).

It's unique feature includes that the youth from 45 countries also take part in the Youth Forum and they will be stay one night at Chitlang, Makwanpur. World Dignity Forum (WDF), led by Dalit NGO Federation (DNF) and World Feminist Forum, Peasant Forum etc will be held simultaneously.

**What are the key agendas of the WSF?**

Key agenda will cover economic inequalities, racial and caste discrimination, untouchability, climate change, genocide of Palestinian by Israel, poverty, hunger, unequal distribution etc. Caste based discrimination and untouchability issues will be more discussed in Dignity Forum also.

**Nepal has various agendas like untouchability and caste discrimination, issues of women, Adivasi Janajati, Poverty etc and there is weak implementation of legal provision, how are you looking those things?**

Yes, definitely WSF will raise the issues of effective law enforcement, accountability, corruption which are consequences of the neo-liberalism and capitalist world order. I think that WSF will also raise the issues of inclusive democracy, human rights, freedom and the like. Capitalism talks about technical democracy, but inclusive democracy talks about full and just democracy. It denies the system of controlling property and resources by few handful people.

**What strategy WSF is adopting to take the big powers into confidence and bring their solidarity upon the agenda as well as take support for implementing the suggestion given from it?**

It is an alternative pressure group. We raise the world issues in different way following the national and international legal framework also.

**The Government of Nepal expects WSF not to raise the slogan of Free Tibet and Free Kashmir, if those issues raised, it will jeopardize the geopolitical balance as it is lie between China and India, how are you handling the mass respecting the Nepali law?**

It's very good question. We are very sensitive on these issues. We have held series of discussion with the government of Nepal and we have already shared it's sensitivity to the front-liners of WSF. It is just an open space but everybody will be responsible for creating and preserving the spaces by respecting national and international legal framework. It is an

alternative discourse for creating pressure to the government and world power. We will give suggestion through our declaration.

## Speaking Up, Speaking Out !

**Why now? Why not? Why wait?**

Time is of the essence to speak up and speak out on values important to foster a sense of world community to address human, animal, planetary and environmental concerns.

Addressing diversity and equality health, hope, hunger, is not an option, but a world mandate to accomplish. We are ONE world and ONE people all trying to thrive and survive the challenges that confront each of us on a daily basis.

There is no comparison of my issues against your issues. The task becomes how can we help each other? The universal principle I have quoted all my personal and professional life is: "As you give, you receive. As you receive, you give."

Let us look into our heart basket of expertise, providing service through actions, words, prayer and intention. Connect to divine inspiration to guide you holding the principles of caring for, caring about and caring with each other.

Obviously we can't do everything for everybody all the time. We can however, do something every day large or small that uplifts the spirit, feeds the hungry, supports the infirm, protects the environment, saves the planet and nourishes the soul.

Hold steadfast the ONENESS principle: "As you give, you receive. As you receive, you give."

Let us achieve: Peace within, Peace between and Peace among for ALL!



**Dr. Mary Jo Bulbrook**  
President, Akamai University

## WSF unifies the space for the transnational actors of the counter-hegemonic globalization



Ashok Kumar Sinha,  
NACDAOR/India

**Would you please explain few things about WSF? What is this all about? What does it really mean?**

The World Social Forum is a Global Platform for Civil Society Organizations. It is an inclusive platform bringing together non-governmental organization, advocacy campaign and formal & informal social movements, unions, academia seeking international solidarity as well as to envision alternatives to prevailing systems. The World Social Forum is held by members of the alter-globalization movement (also referred to as the global justice movement) who come together to coordinate global campaigns, share and refine organizing strategies, and inform each other about movements from around the world and their particular issues. The World Social Forum is explicit about not being a representative of all of those who attend and thus does not publish any formal statements on behalf of participants.

It emerged in 2001 with its inaugural gathering in Port Alegre, Brazil. Since then, it has fostered diverse global, regional, and national forums, spanning continents and addressing critical social and environmental concern. Since 2001, the United Nations has had a presence at the WSF through UNESCO, showing the institutional credibility achieved by the forum, seen by UNESCO as a "prime opportunity for dialogue and a laboratory of ideas for the renewal of public policies" through "critical reflection on the future of societies we want to create and for elaborating proposals in search of solidarity, justice, peace and human rights.

**As you know that World Social Forum (WSF) is going to be held in Nepal on February 2024, in your view, what is the rationale of organizing such forum?**

The WSF has been a unifying space for the transnational actors of the counter-hegemonic globalization from below with the pledge of 'Another World is Possible. The 16th edition of the World Social Forum Nepal (WSF) is set to be held from February 15-19,

## WSF should be able to respect Co-existence with Dignity among diverse intersectional communities

**How are you observing the planning of WSF2024 Nepal?**

WSF is going to be held in Nepal from 15-19 February 2024 which is very good opportunity for Nepalese social activists and human rights defenders.



**Ms. Durga Sob**  
Women Rights Activist

Marginalized people mainly Dalits and Dalit women should be given priority not only in World Dignity Forum, but also in World Social Forum and Feminist Forum.

I think, mainstream social movement and feminist movement is not taking Dalits women's issues seriously. They are not Dalit and they definitely don't raise the issues, there will be the chance to generalize severe issue of Dalit women. For us, working for the social cause, this forum is the greatest alternative forum.

As mainstream feminist movement take us as competitor, they won't entertain us to include. But we should be creating our own space exhibiting our power, capacity and expertise. If you are not represented physically, your issues won't raise and won't be able to get attention of larger population.

**Why World Dignity Forum (WDF) and World Feminist Forum (WFF) have been planned to organize as there is planning of WSF as a whole?**

Yes, WDF, WFF and WYF are also planned to organize. I think, these are good for making adequate discussion and discourse of the different intersectional issues and agenda. WSF might not be able to have adequate discussion of feminist issues, Dalit, Dalit women and marginalized issues and youth issues, as well as LGBTIQ+ issues. With view to this, those forums would be crucial for raising the diverse issues of different communities.

2024 in Kathmandu, Nepal. The thematic assemblies and parallel sessions will be held on February 16, 17 and 18 respectively. An Intercontinental Youth Forum will be organized on February 17 in Kathmandu. There will be around 900-1000 self-organized activities and assemblies throughout the WSF 2024 event. The forum is anticipated to have over 50,000 participants, delegates, and guests from all continents of the world.

Organizing the event in Nepal will give opportunities to share Nepal's experiences of social movements with the global platform. There is Freedom of opinion and expression, assemble peaceably and without arms, freedom to form unions and associations, freedom to move and reside in any part of Nepal, which provides an enabling environment to conduct the World Social Forum in Nepal.

The socio-economical and political challenges of Nepal will be also presented in different thematic assemblies and parallel sessions by the representatives of NGOs as well as primary stakeholders.

Nepal is extremely vulnerable to climate change and has been warned by experts for a long time. Climate change has impacted multiple sectors—environment, agriculture, animal husbandry, drinking water, health, food security, hydropower, education, and women's empowerment. The thematic session on climate justice, ecology, just transitions, habitat, and sustainable development will help in addressing the climate crisis in Nepal.

Dalits constitute an estimated 20 percent of Nepal's population and are subjected to as many as 205 different forms of discriminatory practices. They are religiously, culturally, socially, economically and historically oppressed, excluded and treated as 'untouchables'. Many become victims of caste related violence, e.g. when attempting to enter inter-caste marriages. Crimes against Dalits are more often than not committed with impunity. The thematic session on caste, discrimination based on work and descent (DWD), race, ethnicity, indigenous people, untouchability, xenophobia, and all

forms of discrimination during the WSF add values in addressing the issues.

Amid challenges, Nepal is leading the way towards operationalizing its green, resilient, and inclusive development vision to shape the country's long-term economic recovery. Improved external competitiveness is key to driving this recovery and enabling Nepal to compete in export markets, in terms of both prices and quality. The World Social Platform will contribute in developing action plan for addressing the challenges as well as shaping the country's long-term sustainable inclusive developmental agenda.

**What would be the key thematic areas that should be taken into consideration in WSF?**

The World Social Forum gathers social forces and aims to promote democratization and social justice. The WSF aims to provide alternative approaches to global economic and social issues focusing on the understanding that globalization should be approached from the context of global solidarity. Keeping these perspective in the background, WSF 2024 has included various thematic areas, which will be discussed and debated. The broad thematic areas in the WSF 2024 includes topics such as economic inequality and economic justice, labor, migration, slavery and trafficking, caste, discrimination based on work and descent (DWD), race, ethnicity, indigenous people, untouchability, xenophobia, and all forms of discrimination, gender, sexuality and identities, and gender-based violence, land, agriculture, food sovereignty, agro-ecology, energy and natural resources, peace, conflict, war, occupations, displacements, and security, education, art and culture, communication, social networks and media (digital equality), democracy, human rights, authoritarianism, law and justice, health, social protection and equity, climate justice, ecology, just transitions, habitat, and sustainable development, women, children, youth, adolescents, aging people and persons with disabilities, social movements, civic space and the future of the World Social Forum. It is also expected that the Forum's will create reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences, and interlinking for effective actions.

**What would be the key take away/message of this Forum by organizing in Nepal?**

Towards reducing inequality, greater efforts are needed to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, and invest more in health, education, social protection and decent jobs especially for young people, migrants and other vulnerable communities. The WSF processes will help towards attainment of all Sustainable Development Goal. Resources will be also mobilized for

addressing the concerns and issues of socially excluded and vulnerable communities. The platform of WSF will be strengthened. More number of civil society organizations and social movements will come together to oppose to neoliberal globalization and capitalist economic policies all over the world. The WSF will continue serving as an open space and platform for the convergence of a diverse range of participants, including social movements, laborers, farmers, civil society groups, marginalized communities, and those affected by the impacts of neoliberal capitalism and privatization.

**Would it be possible to take into confidence to big powers and other developing nations on the themes which would be discussed in the forum?**

For the past two decades, the World Social Forum (WSF) has served as an open meeting place for social movements, networks, NGOs and other civil society organizations who are aiming to build alternatives to neoliberalism and who are opposed to a world dominated by patriarchy, capitalism, colonization, and imperialism. Interest and engagement in the WSF have recently decreased dramatically, however, leaving many activists to question whether the WSF still has the relevance for social movements that it once did.

There are positive take away of the World Social Forum in the past. We are expecting positive outcomes from this WSF also. The identified thematic issues are pro-poor especially it is catering the needs of socially excluded and vulnerable communities. I am hopeful that big powers and other developing nations will take up the outcomes of WSF.



## Int'l People's Writers Association held it's conference Hon'ble Khem Nepali elected as the Chair

### Voiceless Voicess

Biratnagar: A two-day's international conference of International People's Writers Association has been concluded at Biratnagar by electing new executive committee. The Conference being organized on 25-26 December 2023 was participated by the litterateurs from around many South Asian countries like India, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal.

At the Conference, Hon'ble Ganesh Upreti (Shashikiran), the Minister for Tourism, Forest and Environment of Koshi Province was present as a Chief Guest and Mr. Mahendra Narayan Pankaj, the General Secretary of the very Writers' Association was present as a Special Guest in the Conference. Inaugural ceremony was held first day and seminar was held on Socialist Literature for Creating Socialism; and Poetry Seminar was also held at evening.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony Hon'ble Minister Ganesh Upreti extended best wishes for successful completion of the conference and highlighted that the literature is the third pillar of societal and national transformation. He made the commitment that he will support to such program on behalf of his ministry as such type of programs had played crucial role for political transformation in past and will support in future also. Hon'ble Rekha Kumari Yadav, a Member of Federal Parliament and poet, ex

provincial minister Mr. Jay Narayan Yadav, Poet and ex Member of Parliament Kunta Sharma expressed their best wishes for successful completion of the conference.

The conference has elected Hon'ble Khem Nepali (Nepal) for the position of Chair, Prof. Dr. Mahesh Prasad Ahirwar (India), Prof. Dr. Dushila Takbhore (India), Mr. Rambabu Dahal and Yubaraj Baskota (Nepal), Mr. Abdus Sahad Sarkar (Bangladesh), Mr. Ambi Bishwas (Bhutan) have been elected as the vice chairs of the Association. Likewise, Mr. Mahendra Narayan Pankaj as General Secretary and Prof. Dr. Kantilal Yadav (India), Mr. Saroj Dilu BK (Nepal), Dr. Dhruva Kumar (Bangladesh) have been elected as Secretaries and Mr. Prem Ojha as a Treasurer of the Association.

The Members of the Associations includes Dr. Mukesh Kumar, Dr. Ruby Faujdar, Mr. Binod Kissa, Mr. Radheshyam Mehra, Mr. Valwanta Singh, Ms. Anju Gitanjalee, Ms. Mina Rani from India; and Ms. Madhu Pokharel, Mr. Hari Kattel, Mr. Krishna Gajmer, Mr. Rajesh Thapa from Nepal and Ms. Puja Bahar and Mr. Anish Rashim from Bangladesh.

Likewise, Nepal Chapter of International People's Writers Association has been reformed under the chairmanship of Mr. Shiva Narayan Simhal. "In Bangladesh and Bhutan also, same type of chapters will be reformed" organizers said.

## Dr. Simon, Curator of Caste Discourse in America

BY ANITA PARIYAR

LAW, CASTE AND THE PURSUIT OF JUSTICE, the sixth international conference on the Unfinished Legacy of Dr. BR Ambedkar was hosted by CASTE, a global journal on social exclusion in October 20-22,

2023, at Brandeis University, Boston, USA.



Global Forum Treasure with Dr. Simon

The conference itself was crucial to carry a significant meaning as scholars from different Universities gathered

to discuss about Caste at the Prominent Policy Institute in the USA. Honorable Justice Dr. Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud, delivered his keynote speech in final day of the conference as a chief guest, who is also the Chief Justice of India. The conference was attended by guests from India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, The UK, Canada and across the USA.

The Center for Global Development and Sustainability in 2015, inaugurated an annual conference on Caste. The first three conferences were hosted at Brandeis University. Fourth Caste conference was hosted at Massachusetts/Amherst, fifth was hosted at the New School, New York and, the Sixth again at Brandeis.

Curator of this significant Caste discourse in America is the Professor Lawrence Simon. Mr. Simon is professor of International Development and Director of the Center for Global Development and Sustainability. Prof. Simon was the founding Director of the Graduate Programs in Sustainable International Development from 1993 to 2014. He served as the Associate Dean for Academic Planning at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management from 2003 to 2009.

Since 2018, Prof. Simon serves as the Joint Editor-in-Chief of Caste: A global journal on Social Exclusion, an open access, peer-reviewed journal published under the auspices of the Brandeis Library. Dr. Simon is one of the Pioneers in initiating Caste Matters in Academic discourse in the USA. He contributed much to pass the Anti-Discriminatory Policy in his University. Dr. Simon has also contributed to install DR. Ambedkar's Statue at the Brandeis University Library in 2019.

Prof. Simon's research and teaching center on critical issues of social exclusion and emancipatory development. His current research focuses on psychological and cultural barriers to social inclusion, poverty reduction, and on the role of social moments in development. In 2007, Dr. Simon took a leave from Brandeis to serve as the senior adviser on global poverty to the executive director of the Google Foundation and helped establish google.org's initial strategies and recruitment of senior staff.

Prof. Simon is an adviser on higher education curriculum development and governance. Dr. Simon served on the working group, appointed by the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, for the design of a new university in Sri Lanka and will be advising Kathmandu University in Nepal as a Fulbright Specialist.

Dr Simon mentored some Nepali Scholars including the Chief-Edito of this bulletin, Dr. Man BK under Fulbright Fellowship at Brandeis University. Recently, Dr. Simon has announced Postdoc Fellowship in Critical Caste Studies for two years at the Brandeis University's South Asian Studies Program.

## EDITORIAL

## Another World is Possible with Protective Liberalism

Two decades ago, the world witnessed massive mobilizations against the destructive impacts of neo-liberal globalization, leading to a vital conversation about alternatives to this prevailing development model. The first World Social Forum (WSF) was held in Porto Alegre in Brazil in 2001 and served as a space for diverse social movements, community campaigns, trade unions, youth organizations, academia, and others to congregate and collaborate.

The last WSF (2023) was held online from 23 to 31 January 2023 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with the theme of "Another World is Possible: People, Planet, Peace over Profit" It also marked the 20th anniversary of the WSF process and the launch of a new phase of mobilization and convergence for global justice.

This time, Nepal is hosting WSF 2024 in the city of Kathmandu. Nepal stands as a democratic nation with a constitutional commitment to socialism orientation. However, social transformation in term of discrimination and disparity has not been achieved as expected. Despite the parliamentary declaration as "Untouchability-free nation" decades back there are still immense events of the caste-based discrimination. Moreover, it has been spread all over the globe where Hindu communities have been migrated and settled as stated by Dr. Ambedkar long back. Some current testimonies are covered in previous and current issues of this bulletin. With the change in political system the mode of caste-based atrocities has been also reframed in invisible frame. The policies and institutional structures are shaped in such a way that it strengthens the domination of privileged, such as against the fundamental principle of reservation, the laws are going through with the reservation to the privileged castes such as Khas-Aryas which is against the spirit of constitutional provision of proportional representation. Moreover, they malpractice the quotas in political system for their own benefit by sending high-profile politicians under it.

The political practices seem to gain the 'power of domination' rather than serving the people even under the socialism-oriented federal republic. It is due to the deep-rooted Hindu caste system and neoliberal economic policy. Because the Hindu system is very much built on the Brahmanism. The neo-liberal globalization has not only damaged the native systems but also recreated the neo-liberal atrocities and disparities. Consequently, we are currently facing an unprecedented environmental crisis coupled with rising inequality, widespread food insecurities, majoritarian violence, after effects of the last pandemic and the threat of a future one, and escalating tensions between major powers. According to UN report 2020 still 1.3 billion people are without access to basic needs. The WB estimated close to 90 million people expected to fall into extreme deprivation only in year 2020.

Even though the principle of mixed economy was to bring the best practices of the two economic models (free-market economy: Capitalism and planned economy: Socialism) and make the economy prosperous no 'third world' countries, except very few, could do so rather many countries fell into the protracted conflicts that again degraded their economy. In the name of globalization free market policy became the means of contemporary form of imperialism through invasion in the national economy damaging domestic/local systems. Even in its early stage Marx predicted that the capitalist economies would have periodic crises and ultimately the system would collapse. In fact, the great depression of 1930 was the result of free market, the financial crisis of 2008/09 the result of neoliberalism and the recent pandemic, to some extent, the result of globalization.

In brief, capitalism has generated massive wealth for some, but it has devastated the planet and has failed to improve human well-being at scale. Corporate capitalism is committed to the relentless pursuit of growth, even if it ravages the planet and threatens human health. So, we need to build a new world order that rests upon sustainability, dignity, co-existence, equality, and equity must be enacted and actualized. Later days the principle of protectionism has been imposed even in the countries practicing capitalism. The concept of 'Protective Liberalism' has been introduced as supplementary to libertarianism that builds 'Liberal Socialism' as a political philosophy.

With the pledge of 'Another world is possible' the WSF emerges as a beacon of hope, more essential than ever before. It is more hopeful as it is hosted by the least development country, Nepal which is moving through vicious circle of deprivation despite the changes in political system. We wish the gathering of the committed civil societies from around the globe would establish such economic policy so as to gain the transformative democracy which brings the emancipatory shift in the lives of the human being with planetary health.

Together with a belief that another world is possible and necessary, we must fight through a mesh of alliances for justice, peace, equity, and the protection of nature and our planet. Otherwise it would be mere a touristic gathering with empty hands. We, the team of the Voiceless Voices, commit to bring out the voices suppressed under the neoliberal atrocities to the globe regularly until the "another world" is made.

## WORLD DIGNITY FORUM: Colouring the World Social Forum

The World Social Forum is "an open space – plural, diverse, non-governmental and non-partisan – that stimulates the decentralized debate, reflection, proposal building, experiences exchange and alliances among movements and organizations engaged in concrete action towards a more solidary, democratic and fair world; a permanent space and process to build alternatives to neoliberalism." Participating organisations, institutions, non-governmental organisations, advocacy campaigns, and formal and informal movements broadly agree to the World Social Forum Charter and organise activities as self-organised or in collaboration and jointly seek the participants' solidarity. All World Social Forum follow a similar pattern. It does not mean that the local host organising committee cannot innovate or experiment or add new features to the World Social Forum. The World Social Forum being held in Kathmandu in Nepal in February 2024 will not be much different.

The Charter of the World Social Forum reads that the World Social Forum is a "world process" and all meetings held as part of the World Social Forum, have an "international dimension." The WSF charter declares, "World Social Forum is opposed to all totalitarian and reductionist views of economy, development, and history" and is opposed to the "use of violence as a means of social control". The WSF charter "upholds respect for Human Rights, the practices of real democracy, participatory democracy, peaceful relations, in equality and solidarity, among people, ethnicities, genders, and people. It condemns all forms of "domination" and all subjection of "one person by another."

As a forum for debate, the World Social Forum is a movement of ideas that prompts reflection, and the transparent circulation of the results of that reflection, on the mechanisms and instruments of domination by capital, on means and actions to resist and overcome that domination. But it is not limited to debates, discussions, or deliberations. It promotes "alternatives" that propose to solve the "problems of exclusion and social inequality" that "capitalist globalization with its racist, sexist, and environmentally destructive dimensions" is creating.

The World Social Forum seeks to strengthen and create new national and international links among organizations and movements of society, resisting the "process of dehumanization" and thus "reinforcing the humanizing measures" by the action of these movements and organizations.

In the World Social Forum 2004 in Mumbai, India, the National Conference of Dalit Organisations (NACDOR), [now National Confederation of Dalit and Adivasi Organisations (NACDAOR)] conceptualise the idea of World Dignity Forum and proposed to create a global platform within the World Social Forum to unitedly champion "Equal Dignity of All". World Dignity Forum led by the NACDAOR, and other partner organisations creatively presented the concerns, issues, and aspirations of the vast majority of excluded, exploited, suppressed, persecuted, and marginalised people. The World Dignity Forum emerged as the inclusive platform of collective leadership of South Asian Dalits, indigenous people, forest dwellers, ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities, and other excluded people who continue to be subjected to degrading humiliation, human rights violations, social and geographical exclusion based on from caste, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. Reports in the media in 2004 mentioned the World Dignity Forum:

"Dignity as a world necessity is one of the



ASHOK BHARTI

outstanding themes of the 4th World Social Forum, taking place in India. The World Dignity Forum was one of the most crowded events, which also covered issues such as castes and racism. This Forum was organized by the Dalits, the so-called "untouchables", who in the hierarchical Indian caste system are the most oppressed group, representing more than 160 million people. Once again, Globalization was on trial, as neoliberal policies have reduced workers' benefits and the welfare state. One of the issues analysed was that of migration, which has been forced on thousands of workers and affects people's dignity. The critical relationship between caste, class and race oppression was also addressed."

Since 2004, the World Dignity Forum has been an integral part of the World Social Forum Process and continue to be organised and celebrated wherever World Social Forum is organised.

### WORLD DIGNITY FORUM IN WORLD SOCIAL FORUM 2024

World Social Forum (WSF) is again here in Asia after two decades, where nearly 60% of the world's population lives. The WSF 2024 will be organised from 15th – 19th February 2024 in Nepal. Like the Mumbai World Social Forum, the World Dignity Forum will also be held in the Kathmandu World Social Forum to unitedly voice the issues, concerns, and aspirations of the sub-merged majority of the socially excluded, poor and economically unequal, extremely vulnerable to caste, ethnic and religious violence, and victims of human rights violation and bringing equal dignity of all in focus. Dignity means freedom to live in peace, health, and hope.

It is important to emphasise that despite unprecedented socio-economic progress across the continents, exclusionary tendencies rooted in caste, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation continue to defy the universally accepted principles of human rights and equal dignity of all. No continent or country is free from tendencies that undermine the equal dignity of all. Therefore, the World Dignity Forum in World Social Forum provides an opportunity for the world to express its solidarity and commitment to unequivocally condemn inequality of human beings and its socio-economic manifestations in various forms in Nepal and Asia.

Nepal, one of the four of least developing countries (LDC) in South Asia is home to more than 29.1 million people, comprising 38% indigenous, 13.6% Dalit, and about 6% religious minorities. Neighbouring India has more than 17% Dalits, 11% Adivasis, and more than 17% are religious minorities. Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and other South Asian countries also house a significant percentage of social, religious, and ethnic minorities.

The oppressed in these countries and the world over are increasingly articulating their distinct, different, and multiple identities and negotiating for their own space in the public

- Continued in page 6

# Protective Liberalism to Reset the Global Economy Transformative Agenda of World Social Forum 2024



■ DR.MAN BAHADUR B.K.

The global economy has been heavily slowed-down due to the Covid-19 pandemic and protected unrest in the world. It has taught the world new dimensions and opened new discourse. The structure in which the world has been growing economically needs to be modified. It started to establish new protocols in the field of public health, production systems and market; and develop new technologies accordingly. The crucial issue is the temporary policy framework does not maintain perfect balance on earth until and unless the economic policy is reformed. The experiences have confirmed that it is the product of a neoliberal economy that made things happen at once globally. In general, the severity of the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak was relatively high in countries such as Europe and the US, which favor and practice the liberal economy, while comparatively countries with less liberal (closed) economy such as Cuba, North Korea, Russian countries, African and South Asian countries are less affected. Disaster resilience seems to be comparatively effective in those countries. Since the outbreaks originated in China, a country with state capitalism, its economic openness is somewhat responsible for its origin. One bitter fact is that the human races or genes have evolved in course of human civilization and grown up with the herbivorous food around their shelter that made immense immune to disease. But neoliberalism damaged the local food system and made the ubiquitous food that loses its immune system. As a result, whatever the disease, the disease can be worldwide. It is not the advocacy of state capitalism since it has so many bottlenecks. So, it has been essential to restructure the world economy that also favors restoring native food regime which also protects the environment, respects cultural diversity and rewards human pluralism along with equitable economic growth.

Neoliberalism came as the economic policy after the great depression of 1930 which is often associated with laissez-faire economy as conceptualized by Adam Smith back in 18th century that advocates 'free' market and anti-regulatory policies. The policy came after the Keynesian economics that evolved during the great depression which advocated for increased government expenditures and lower taxes to stimulate demand and pull the global economy out of the depression. The capitalist crisis with its shrinking profit rates inspired the corporate elite to revive economic liberalism that made it 'neo' or new. The then British premier Margaret Thatcher became the pioneer of neoliberalism policies in the mid-1970s, a period when Keynesian policies still reigned in Britain and much of the rest of the world. The policy famous with 'thatcherism' has been imposed by powerful financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. Nevertheless, there has been already some structural modification on the policy with protectionism after the financial crisis of 2007-09. It is because neoliberalism could not efficiently balance the global economy rather it created the environment of the rich grow richer and the poor grow poorer around the world. So, the Marxists disparage the policy as the capitalists adopted the neoliberal approach because their class power had been diluted under Keynesianism and was threatened in the mid-1970s. They took neoliberalism to restore the class power because it

creates condition for class formation. With these shortfalls, now, this pandemic has confessed the globe to reframe its economic policy in a new dimension.

Economists projected that the global growth could be cut in half in 2020, to 1.5 percent from an earlier forecast of 3 percent due to the Corona Pandemic. It is projected that for any one percentage point slowdown of the global economy, the number of poor-and with it the number of food insecure people-would increase by 2 percent, that is, by 14 million people. In absolute terms, the greatest regional poverty impact was estimated to fall on Africa south of the Sahara, where 40-50 percent of the global poverty increase would be concentrated. In relative terms, the impact of a trade shock would affect Africa's poor more than South Asia's, given that Africa's economics are, on average, more dependent on trade than those of South Asia, a large but relatively closed economy. The productivity shocks, in contrast, would have a bigger impact on poverty in South Asia than Africa, possibly because of the bigger adverse impact in the scenarios on non-agricultural sectors, which have a large weight in South Asian economics.

Major impacts came from workers unable to do their jobs, resulting in an average decline in labor productivity of 1.4 percent during 2020. Globally the human jobs had squeezed due to the digitalization the International Labor Organization (ILO) has estimated that the global market would lose 25 million more jobs due to this epidemic. Most countries, especially those whose economies are based on remittances, have to go through the outbreak of Dutch Disease. The devastating situation that would arise in countries like Nepal where there is no preparation for alternative measure of remittance would be even more risky. The demand of goods and services are already cut down and it will take time to revive. For example, Smartphone shipments in China was likely to fall 40 percent in the first quarter of 2020 compared with the same period last year. Most halted business sector were small and medium enterprises in which large number of people are employed.

The global epidemic also created opportunities to some countries. At first, it leads the world towards collective human values diverting from the higher materialistic individualism created through the neoliberalism. On the other hand, the pandemic has further confirmed that the world has been a global village. Therefore, in the days ahead, the rigid or orthodox nationalism may not work well. Concentration of development would be what we do for the globe, i.e., people and planet. It also provides an opportunity for the least developed countries to regain their economic status through reframing their economic policy independently. These countries need to enable their capacity to make maximum use of the natural resources by properly managing the human resources, which will have very less with the developed countries as they have already crossed this stage. These countries have huge inventory of both the resources and the market. Optimum utilization of those factors can even change the balance of the world's economic and strategic power. The US will no longer be neither economically nor strategically the most powerful country within few years. The situation in European countries will also decline. China has already shifted this balance. Similarly, Asian and African countries are moving towards taking opportunity to 'Take Off' their economy. These countries will get rid of the existence of imperialism as an integral part of the global capitalist system since the interference from the powerful countries will be minimal as these countries will be stuck with their own domestic affairs and have the opportunity of autonomy, to more extent, in reorganizing economy and market in their own. So, there is the opportunity of overhauling the highly politicized, crony, gray and unproductive heavy structured economy into a new form of economy based on protectionism. This will lead to evolve new fundamental home-grown approach in politico-economy that will replace the economic policy of neoliberalism which

produced much 'neo-liberal atrocities'. In any case, it will emphasize health, safety, dignity, equity and protection of the people and planet as visualized in protective liberalism. It will develop 'human economics' that means economy to benefit all human beings equitably (not for market, not for money), no one leaving behind. That can be the 'Another World' as coined by the World Social Forum.

In conclusion, capitalism has generated massive wealth for some, but it has devastated the planet and has failed to improve human well-being at scale. Corporate capitalism is committed to the relentless pursuit of growth, even if it ravages the planet and threatens human health. So, we need to build a new system that will balance economic mobility and human flourishing. The author developed the concept of 'Protective Liberalism' through a research (2017) as a supplementary to libertarianism that would be the socio-economic policy for 'Liberal Socialism'.

How Does Protective Liberalism Reset the Global Economy?

Since neoliberalism could not efficiently balance the global economy rather it created the environment of the rich grow richer and the poor grow poorer around the world there has been already some structural modification on the policy with protectionism after the financial crisis of 2008-09. The social inequalities among the people are the consequence of neo-liberal economy or

**In general, the severity of the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak was relatively high in countries such as Europe and the US, which favor and practice the liberal economy, while comparatively countries with less liberal (closed) economy such as Cuba, North Korea, Russian countries, African and South Asian countries are less affected.**

capitalism which is against egalitarianism, so the equality of opportunity is seen as desirable and necessary. For that a welfare state needs strong system of solidarity and protection to its weaker section of the beneficiaries such as the vulnerable, the disadvantaged and the left-outs. The state policy of equitable economic mobility and social entrepreneurship through protective liberalism, would support and promote not only achieving the goal of liberal socialism but restore the egalitarian society in a sustainable manner. It seems free market is the ideal force of stimulus at which there is no or less state for market mechanism whereas the protective liberalism is the practical solution within the frame of more responsible 'welfare state' under the political thought of liberal socialism. Mickey Kaus has evolved a concept of 'civic liberalism' similar to protective liberalism. Likewise, Oskar Ryszard Lange evolved similar concept of Market socialism- a type of economic system involving the public, cooperative or social ownership of the means of production in the framework of a market economy. It is a theoretical concept (model) of an economic system in which the means of production (capital) are publicly or collectively owned, and the allocation of resources follows the rules of the market (product-, labour-, capital-markets). In this economic system, he includes 'distribution according to relative needs' which is very close to protective measure to the deprived ones. Likewise, Anthony Giddens (1998) blended two opposing ideologies rationally and brought 'the Third Way' of renewing 'Social Democracy'. The 'third way' suggests that it is possible to combine social solidarity with a dynamic economy. To pursue it, we need 'less national government, less central government, but greater governance over local processes', as well as opening out in the direction of the global community.

Since the Corona-outbreak originated in China, a country with state capitalism, its economic openness is somewhat responsible for its spread. State capitalism is a

## WORLD DIGNITY...

sphere. Distortions of the term have been central in structuring patterns of domination and subordination all over the world. The World Dignity Forum challenges such distortion and articulates the underlying hierarchical relationship between gender and patriarchy to ensure women's dignity, in the face of patriarchal power that has appropriated control over women's labour body and sexuality, under the garb of a discourse of dignity and honour.

Children, the future of the world are the worst victims of routine violation of their dignity and rights at home, schools and in society. They are bullied, scolded, and awarded punishment for innocent wrongs everywhere and in all places. They suffer from societal recognition as human beings.

Fundamentalist majoritarian forces rupturing the civilisational fabric of mutual love, affection, and cooperation in society, undermining legal democratic norms, and exercising violence against religious minorities, an assault on dignity need to be denounced. In the struggle for dignity, employment, education, health, freedom from hunger, guaranteed livelihood, social security, and related economic and social rights are crucial in ensuring an equally dignified existence for all human beings.

The World Dignity Forum attempts to forge alliances among like-minded individuals and groups at the global level. A perspective from the subalterns and the marginal, and the recovery of a democratic state is crucial for ensuring minimum conditions for dignity. The World Dignity Forum has always been interspersed with artistic and graphical presentations, case studies from men, women and children, subjected to humiliating attacks, physical and mental, and who fought back to reclaim their dignity along with intellectual deliberation and motivations addressed by the renowned speakers from across the globe.

### PERSPECTIVE OF DIGNITY

Highly acclaimed documents of international polity and law such as the United Nations have used the term 'dignity'. As a concept, the term dignity has acquired a central space in the constitutions of many countries, including of India. This idea and the concept of dignity evolved theoretically long before modern constitutionalism. However, it is now acquiring a central space in these struggles of the socially excluded communities such as Dalits, Adivasis, and ethnic and sexual minorities. The concept of dignity has been variously defined throughout history.

Saint Leo the Great (died 461 AD) considered that man was born worthy and that all human beings, from this perspective, shared the same or equal dignity. But for Saint Thomas of Aquinas (1225 – 1275) dignity is something that should be won, risked for and could even be lost. For him, dignity is an ethical category and although it is from birth, it must be maintained. Renaissance philosopher Giannozzo Manetti (1396 – 1459), author of *Dignitate et excellentia hominis* (1452), described it as an ontological category that supposed that every man, was born worthy and that such a dignity was shared equally by all human beings. Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494), famous for his speech entitled on human dignity considers freedom and dignity as inalienable. It is not considered as a dynamic category, as something that should be conquered, but rather is understood statically, as something already given, that cannot be lost.

In France, the debate about human dignity or human misery had its main actor in Pierre Boaistuau, who published his work in French in 1557 that was dedicated to grieving human miseries. Like other Renaissance philosophers, he also said that men are born worthy, and all are born with equal dignity.

David Hume (1711-1776) laid the foundation of empiricism and utilitarianism, in his essay on "Of the Dignity or the Meanness of Human Nature" arbitrates in the dispute between the dignity or meanness of human nature. For him the recognition of the idea of human dignity is more convenient than denying it or raising that the human being is mean, because when man is pre-possessed with a high notion of his rank and character in the creation, he will naturally endeavour to act up to it, and will scorn to do a base or vicious action which might sink him below that figure which he makes in his own imagination. Therefore, for Hume, man is not born

worthy (wurdig dignus), but rather it 'becomes' worthy (because there are no innate ideas) and that such dignity is 'generally' predicated of everyone.

According to Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804), dignity finds its ground in the human autonomy. Human autonomy (grounds of dignity) has its base in the statement that the Man 'exists as an end in itself, not only a means' for whatsoever uses. But in a later work, the *Metaphysik der Sitten* (1797) Kant introduced some very important precisions: first, dignity is configured not so much as a fact or factum (in the order of the 'being') but as a petition of principle (in order of the 'should be'); second, he conceives dignity like a self-esteem or moral elevation. Under this second Kantian position, dignity would be understood as an ethical category that would rest in the human freedom to overcome inclinations and fulfil the duty by using reason; the consequence is that although man can be 'born' worthy, that does not imply that he will always be so, nor always in the same degree. Friedrich von Schiller (1759 – 1805) published his work *About Grace and Dignity* in 1793, in which he discussed the difference between Grace and Dignity. In his conception of dignity, everyone is born with a 'certain' dignity, because everyone is born endowed with a will. But not all have equal dignity because not all can rise the same way above instincts.

George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770 – 1831) did not remain aloof from the concept of dignity, but the notion acquired a different sense in his works. For Hegel, dignity is an ethical idea, and it would be necessary to say that the man is not 'born worthy' but rather "becomes" worthy from the moment in which he assumes his citizenship, thus overcoming both situations: the thesis and antithesis. In as much as man reaches such a synthesis it does not seem to be any reason opposed to the consideration that every citizen is 'equal' in dignity.

These discussions could be summed up in the words of Bob Dylan :

So many roads, so much at stake,  
So many dead ends,  
and I'm on the edge of the lake,  
sometimes I wonder what's gonna take,  
to find dignity?

It is obvious from the above discussion that although dignity has been discussed time and again, this discussion has remained limited to the origin of dignity. One stream of philosophical thought maintains that human beings is 'born with dignity' and they consider it as innate, while the other stream of thought tends to define it as an acquired quality of human beings which could be won or lost.

But what is this "Dignity" that needs to be talked about? Is it a quality or right or is it something else? Why does this idea of dignity evoke an enthusiastic response in some and less of it in others? What is its potential and how could this potential affect the course of the human struggle for a just and equitable space in the society? Could this idea unite people divided into caste, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, or religious background and pave the path for a common struggle to end discrimination, exclusion, and miseries of humanity? Is it independent of the socio-economic-political or cultural milieu of the society or a product of the existing hierarchical structures? There could be as many questions as one could think up. Is it synonym with self-respect or is it something else?

To justify or perpetuate the existing inequalities, and discriminatory exclusion based on them, the existing system seems to promote dignity as an acquired right or quality. If one accepts this scenario, then one has no choice but to accept that the State or the existing hierarchical structures of society are free to exercise their right to assign dignity to whomever they like or deny it to others who question them or who suffer for no fault of theirs. It is with this proposition that people tend to agree that all rights are second to existence. However, this proposition must be rejected and one must look into what dignity is.

Dignity is the consciousness of self that distinguishes human beings from other living or non-living beings. It is the innate right of human beings, which is second to none, not even second to the right of existence. It makes people automatically worthy and honourable. This then compels the recognition of these rights not only toward individuals but also concerning communities and people if both recognise

and respect the inalienable rights of the dignity of individuals.

Dignity could also be defined in terms of an individual or a community. For an individual, it is the consciousness of one's existence when one considers oneself equally worthy. It also means that one is not excluded and discriminated or humiliated on any grounds, be it caste, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or disability. It ensures that no belief or prejudice impairs one's participation in the social economic or political realm of the society. In interpersonal relationships, one is accorded the same respect, honour, and warmth as one seeks from others.

In the case of communities, it is the communitarian feeling that extends equal worth to other communities, such as to Dalits by non-Dalits, to Coloured by the Whites, to women by the men and to people of one ethnicity or religion by the other ethnicity or religion in the society. It means that the social status of one community does not differ from the other. Therefore, in a dignified society, the Dalits or the Blacks or people of other Ethnicity or religion would not be lower or higher than that of the Savarna (Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya) or intermediaries Shudra castes in case of India, or the Whites man or people of other ethnicities in their respective countries or continent. Similarly, women or sexual minorities will not be treated as inferior or superior to the man or the sexual majorities. A society could only be a dignified one if it has no vertical hierarchies and opposes all kinds of exclusion or discrimination in its horizontal structures.

We must understand that dignity is a multidimensional and multi-layered concept. In the current socio-economic paradigm, dignity is also related in crucial ways to the economic or financial standing of a human being. People tend to behave differently with people of different economic conditions. This could be easily understood by the behaviour of the people with the rickshaw pullers in cities or Burakumin means in Japan or Aborigines in Australia or Roma in Europe. The rickshaw puller in India who drives a tricycle rickshaw, an extremely popular form of short distance transport, is treated as if they are the slaves of the riders. People, who hardly know the rickshaw puller's social condition or is cast behave contemptuously or humiliate him for all sorts of reasons from his labour to slow driving. Even if poor or a lower cast passenger whose dignity is abused in many ways hardly recognises the dignity of the unfortunate rickshaw puller.

It is, therefore, quite necessary to explore the causes of this social psychology that plays a pivotal role in depriving human beings of their humanity. It would be wrong if dignity is equated with self-respect or is assigned as a question of self-respect. It has already been pointed out that dignity is multi-dimensional, and self-respect is only one among its many dimensions. But this is not to deny that the struggles against discrimination that Dalits in India, or the Blacks all over the world, women, and minorities that they have waged globally are, to a larger extent, not the struggles for self-respect. Yet, this is only the beginning of the first phase of the dignity struggle. As this struggle grows, it addresses more and more issues and ultimately becomes a multidimensional struggle for Dignity.

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## Protective Liberalism ...

system where the state dominates the market's activities for a political purpose. Adolf Wagner regarded state capitalism as a solution of compromise between competitive capitalism and socialism. It is a system in which the government realizes that profitable enterprises owned by the state make the state stronger. Adolf Wagner has foreseen a system of redistribution of wealth between the classes of society with the help of the fiscal system, meant to stop people from gaining too much wealth. However, state capitalism in China and in the rest of the world has several limitations, i.e., the state-owned companies are less efficient, use cheap capital, throw aside the private entrepreneurs, comparatively have less safety-nets and benefit for political favoritism.

The Covid-19 pandemic has now strongly justified that the nation-state should be a responsible welfare state. The welfare system should be restructured in an innovative way. Social innovation frequently occurs at the local level, communities as a part of larger civil society have their native skill, knowledge and practices that can be base to dig in for innovation. Social welfare is the result from a change in economic and non-economic variables and a function of the utility (satisfaction) level of all individuals constituting the society. But any changes may benefit one section of the society and harm the other. For that, Kaldor-Hicks-Scitovsky developed compensation principle. However, when the harms go for centuries to some caste, class or race of people then the state should satisfy them with reparation policy for their lost opportunities and dignity. Once the social choice, i.e. neoliberalism, is made all the individual comprising the society are compelled to accept it since social preference dominates individual preferences. It is not because they would benefit from it but because they do not have alternative social choice for the time being, no individual can disregard the social choice derived through a process. They would rather have deprived of their capability resulting the inequality of opportuni-

ties. Amartya Sen proposed an inequality adjusted welfare function, a relative inequality measure. Nevertheless, the inequality is the result of exclusion, a social injustice. So, the welfare should be measured with the inclusion/exclusion dynamics of the policy. The welfare depends on efficiency of the policy and it should be oriented towards the 'Pareto Optimality'. The research by the author (2008) revealed that higher the inclusivity of a policy framework higher is its utility (welfare).

The reparation policy as a protective measure should be undertaken to compensate the historical loss in welfare. It should be a righteous phenomenon in a democratic 'welfare state'. So, the sustained protective measures in the market mechanism not only compensate the loss or harm due to the social choice but also redistribute the income in an equitable manner. It would bring the emancipatory shift to those marginalized section of the society. Therefore, while making a welfare policy, the state needs to analyze its losers and simultaneously establish compensation policy as the protective measure which is the main ingredient of protective liberalism. However, the question always raises on the process of making social choice or judging social welfare. Simple way of dealing it is the inclusionary representation policy as characterized with transformative democracy, the pillar of liberal socialism. It is beyond private or corporate capitalism and state capitalism at which the society or even a community will have command over the means of production ultimately for the social wellbeing. So, it can be coined as the 'social capitalism' as well.

Marx opined that the capitalists are able to exploit the labour class and extract surplus value from it because they have the ownership of non-human means of production. Amartya Sen in his entitlement approach marked that an entitlement set of a person is determined by his original bundle of ownership and additional bundles acquired; and famine is seen through the lens of loss of such entitlement. These days, the equity of the most of the corporate houses is concentrated in the hands of a selected few. Those

large number of absent owner have no stake in the communities in which the companies operate. So, the collective ownership or social entitlement through the stake-holding that widens the proximity of redistribution of surplus value is the basic of the policy of protective liberalism. Likewise, the compensatory provisions within progressive taxation is other fiscal mechanism to make it more equitable. Building egalitarian society from bottom to top is the basic part of the protective liberalism. It assures both redistribution of income and increased social solidarity. It involves a balance between regulation and deregulation at national and sub-national levels; and a balance between the economic and the non-economic variables in the life of the society. Protecting participation of the left-out people in governance itself provides an involvement with the system, safeguards the interest of the poor and marginalized communities and serves to stimulate the transformation.

Therefore, there should be 'inclusive democracy' or 'democratisation of democracy' as the political foundation for an equitable development of a nation, that is in fact the transformative democracy. It makes the winner-takes-all competitions less attractive, thus limits the in-egalitarian outcomes. Thus, protective liberalism to the left out people is neither anti-capitalism nor anti-socialism, rather it is the basic foundation for the transformative democracy which establishes the emancipatory shift in the lives of the left out people. In fact, it is the process of building the human economics which concentrates on the human wellbeing in an equitable manner rather than materialistic possession.

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## Shall WSF ...

geographical location, ethnicities, sexual orientation and many more" Dr. Timsina says, "now there is the urgent need of making another world, another worldview, deconstructing the center and hierarchies and preparing the strategies for overcoming it."

Dr. Mary Jo Bulbrook, the president of Akamai University, USA is of the view that time is of the essence to speak up and speak out on values important to foster a sense of world community to address human, animal, planetary and environmental concerns.

Ms. Durga Sob, women rights activist and former president of Feminist Dalit Organization, Nepal says that WSF should be able to respect co-existence with Dignity among diverse intersectional community. She has suspicion on whether it will be able to raise the issues of Women, Dalits, Dalit women, muslims and other minorities.

Dr. Bulbrook clarifies that there is no comparison of her issues against other's issues. She says, "The task becomes how can we help each other?" It is imperative to have supportive thought. She believes in "universal principles" in her personal and professional life is: "As you give, you receive. As you receive, you give."

"Mainstream social movement and feminist movement is not taking Dalits women's issues seriously" Ms. Sob says, "being non-Dalit, they definitely don't raise the issues, but rather, there will be the chance to generalize the severe issues and concerns of Dalit women." She insists that mainstream feminist movement should take them as complementary, not as a competitor. "We should be creating our own space exhibiting our power, capacity and expertise" she concludes.

Mr. Ashok Kumar Sinha, social activist of India (NACDAOR), opines that WSF unifies the space for the transnational actors of the counter-hegemonic globalization. Mr. Sinha, highlights about the rational of organizing the WSF towards discussing on different issues like reducing inequality, eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, and invest more in health, education, social protection and decent jobs especially for young people, migrants and other vulnerable communities.

Dr. Bulbrook claims, "Obviously we can't do everything for everybody all the time. We can however, do something every day large or small that uplifts the spirit, feeds the hungry, supports the infirm, protects the environment, saves the planet and nourishes the soul."

Mr. Sinha tries to extract the key take away of WSF processes that it will be helpful towards attainment of the Sustainable Development Goal. He highlights it's aims to provide alternative approaches to global economic and social issues focusing on the understanding that globalization should be approached from the context of global solidarity. He elaborates that the key thematic areas of discussion in the WSF 2024 that are economic inequality and economic justice, labor, migration, slavery and trafficking, caste, discrimination based on work and descent (DWD), race, ethnicity, indigenous people, untouchability, xenophobia, and all forms of discrimination, gender, sexuality and identities, and gender-based violence, land, agriculture, food sovereignty, agro-ecology, energy and natural resources, and conflict.

"Minimum 30 thousand people will be taking part from 91 countries around the world will participate in the program" Dr. Timsina, who is fully engaged in organizing the WSF informed to the Voiceless Voices.

He disclosed that 420 parallel sessions will be held during 15-19 February 2024.

The World Social Forum is supposed to mobilize 700 youth volunteers to make forum grand success. Dr. Timsina made it clear that there will be requested not to raise the issue of Free Tibet and Free Kashmir. "If anyone raises such geopolitical issues and gets arrested by Nepal Police, the person or group will be responsible him/her/themselves, WSF won't" Dr. Timilsina clarified.

The self-organizers front-liners and coordinators have informed that the WSF would be inaugurated on 15 Feb from 11 am with Solidarity March from Bhrikutimandap to Bhadrakali and then New Road Gate to Ratnapark and again come back to Bhrikutimandap. Then around 1 pm onward panel of international speakers will address to the inaugural ceremony.

Then 16-18 Feb, there will be hundreds of parallel sessions to make discourse and debate about global to communal issues. On 19 Feb, there will be shared the statements coming out from thematic panel and sessions. And 2 pm onwards of 19 Feb, there will be cultural program with closing ceremony.

Still there is the big question on: Shall WSF be able to build another World?(!)

## Hearty Congratulations!



We would like to proudly extend our **Hearty Congratulations** to **Nirvana Culinary Paradise**, an Indian & Nepalese Restaurant, for receiving **Readers' Choice Awards-2023!** We would extend our best wishes for all the success in the days ahead.

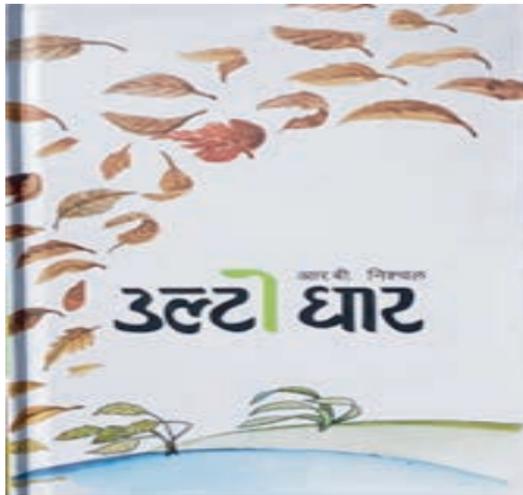
**VOICELESS VOICES TEAM**

## New Book Released

Poems Against Discrimination and Untouchability

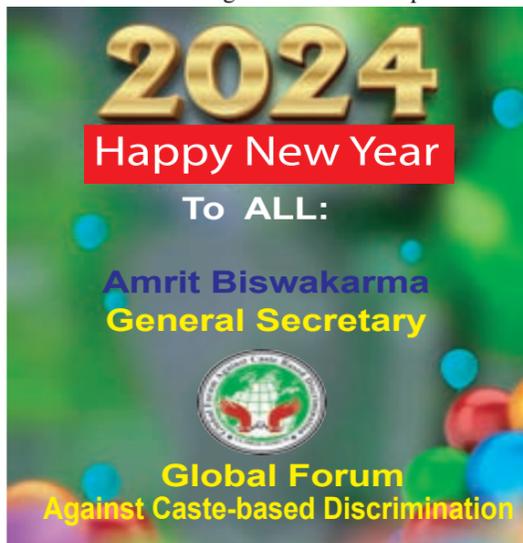
By Voiceless Voices

R.B. Nishchal is a powerful contemporary poet from Palpa. He writes the poems about the voice of voiceless specially against discriminatory practices in the society. He has published six books of poetry so far. His new book i.e. collection of contemporary poems "Ulto Dhar" (Reverse Flow) has been currently launched. This is his sixth published book. This book is



published by phoenix books, Kathmandu. Forty-eight poems are included in this book. These poems are categorized into three different sections. The first section is named "Samaya Chintan" (Time contemplation). Eighteen poems are included in this section. The poems of deep thought are included within this section. Similarly, the second section is named "Prashna" (Question). Twelve poems are included in this section. The poet has asked different questions about racial discrimination, untouchability and inhuman activities taking place in the country. He asks the question - What is caste? In the poem "Jagaka Dhungga" (The stone of Foundation) the poet says that Dalit's are the foundation of the Hindu religion but they are deprived of basic human rights. The last section is named "Aafnai Aankha" (Own Eyes).

Eighteen poems are included in this section. The poet's feelings, experiences and thoughts are expressed in this section. This is a must read book. The main message of the 'Reverse Flow' is metaphor of hardship of doing something which is against the normal social practice indicating raising move against the caste-based atrocities like swimming against the flow of water. The poet writes - The dead fish flows with the flow of water in the river, but, the alive fish flows against the flow of water in the river through so much hardship.



## Movie Review "ORIGIN"

By Peter Travers in GMA

"Origin," the latest gift of essential filmmaking from director-producer-writer Ava DuVernay, goes into wide release in theaters today. Don't pass it by, as some have, maybe thinking that DuVernay's take on Isabel Wilkerson's 2020 nonfiction bestseller, "Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents," sounds more like homework than a fun time at the movies.

Don't jump to conclusions. "Origin," though not a documentary, is still a social history, a spellbinding provocation that takes on weighty themes in drawing parallels among the caste systems in India, Nazi Germany and the American South.

As DuVernay has put it: "It took me a really long time to wrap my mind around the idea that there's something underneath racism that's called 'caste.' It doesn't mean racism doesn't exist. It means the foundation, the root, the origin, underneath is the very simple premise -- someone has to be better than someone else."

**A scene from the movie "Origin."**

How do you make a movie about an intellectual argument? By putting a human face on it. DuVernay's idea was to thrust Wilkerson herself into her own thesis. Not an easy task, and you can feel the bumps in the narrative, especially when her characters become mouthpieces.

Still, there's no denying DuVernay's ambition and grieving heart. All praise then to "King Richard" Oscar nominee Aunjanue Ellis-Taylor, who brilliantly nails every nuance as Wilkerson, the first woman of African-American heritage to win a Pulitzer Prize in journalism.

To heighten the intimacy, DuVernay dramatizes Wilkerson's grief -- the deaths within a year of her white husband Brett Hamilton (a terrific Jon Bernthal), and her mother Ruby (Emily Yancy), the widow of a Tuskegee Airman who inspired Wilkerson's first bestseller, "The Warmth of Other Suns," about the great migration of Black Americans from Southern to Northern states.

DuVernay was also motivated by Trayvon Martin ("MJ" Tony winner Myles Frost), the Black teen whose fatal 2012 Florida shooting at the hands of neighborhood watch member George Zimmerman opens the film. Strong choice since Trayvon's tragic death helped spark the Black Lives Matter movement and incited Wilkerson to start her book about caste hierarchies. The tangle of plots and subplots may throw you off balance. But DuVernay, whose influential work has won an Emmy ("When They See Us") and Oscar attention ("Selma"), grips you hard as she retraces Wilkerson's steps in the book, shooting on location in Berlin, Delhi and the U.S.

**Aunjanue Ellis-Taylor appears in a scene from the movie "Origin."**

Flashbacks illuminate Nazi Germany during the rise of Hitler, Mississippi during the Depression and India when Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar (Gaurav J. Pathania) fought for the rights of Dalits, people degradingly known as "untouchables." How can it be racism, Wilkerson contends, when in India, everyone has similar skin colors? It's the feigned superiority of caste. Is it? DuVernay wisely encourages debate. In an early scene, Wilkerson tries to explain her book's framework to her cousin Marion (the wonderful Niecy Nash-Betts), who brushes off the highfalutin jargon. "Tell it to me plain," says Marion. DuVernay heeds the lesson well. Is she taking on too much? Maybe. DuVernay even financed "Origin" independently, shooting her intimate epic over a scant 37 days, so her vision couldn't be compromised and she could face her audience without an ounce of pomposity or grandstanding.

## Nepali Dalit leaders felicitated in India

Voiceless Voices Editor

Krishna Bahadur Gajmir BK was one of them

By Voiceless Voices

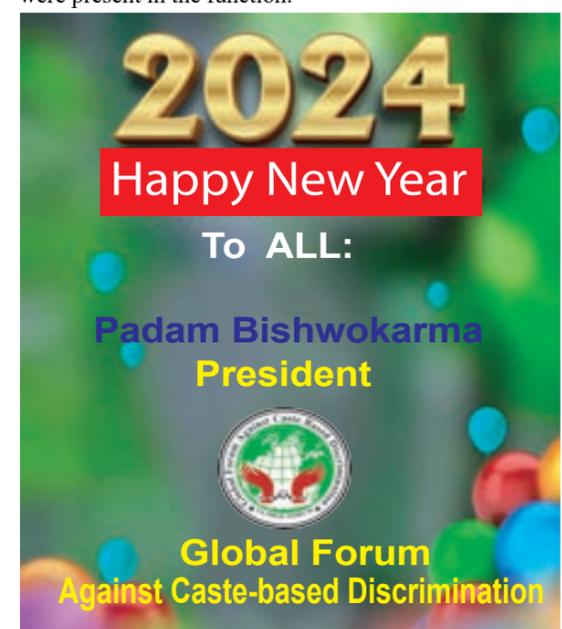
Nepali Dalit leaders have been felicitated at India in the auspicious occasion of 52th National Freedom Day on 12 December 2023. The program being organized by Babu Jagjeevan Ram Arts, Culture and Literature Academy India had organized the International Dalit Confer-



ence to confer award and being felicitated.

The leaders and personalities who were felicitated are Ms. Asha Kumari BK, the ex-federal state minister; Member of Parliament Prabhu Hajara Paswan; Member of National Dalit Commission Mehele Parki; Central Secretary of Dalit NGO Federation Mr. Krishna Bahadur Gajmir BK; Human Rights Activist and Nepal India Friendship Association Member Goma Kumari Sunar, Saru Thapa; Associate Professor of Pokhara Krishna Bahadur Sunar; Baburam Bishwakarma, Ravi Bishwakarma including among others.

The honor program was organized at the Rajendra Bhawan, New Delhi. Former House of Peoples (Lok Sabha) Chair Mrs. Meera Kumar was present as the chief guest and Central Minister of Indian Government Mr. Ramdash Athao and various MLA and dignitaries were present in the function.



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